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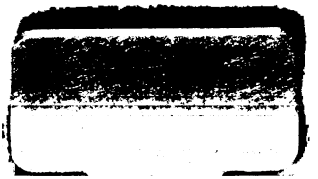
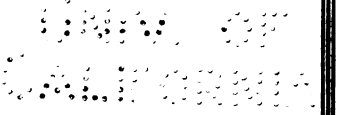


THE KING'S CUPBEARER

AN HISTORICAL MORALITY PLAY IN TWELVE CANTICLES

BY

AGNES CHALMERS



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This book is offered as an American's expression of gratitude to His Majesty, the King of Great Britain and Ireland, and to his valiant armies through whose unselfed service Jerusalem was restored December 9, 1917, to the civilized world.

960
C438

AN EXPLANATION OF THE WRITING OF THIS PLAY

THE POET AND HIS SONGS

As the birds come in Spring
We know not from where;
As the stars come at evening
From depths of the air;

As the rain comes from the cloud
And the brook from the ground
As suddenly, low or loud,
Out of silence a sound;

As the grapes come to the vine
The fruit to the tree;
As the wind comes to the pine
And the tide to the sea;

As comes the white sails of ships
O'er the ocean's verge;
As comes the smile to the lips,
The foam to the surge;

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So come to the Poet his songs,
All hitherward blown
From the misty realm that belongs
To the vast unknown.

* * * * * * * * *

For voices pursue him by day
And haunt him by night,
And he listens and needs must obey,
When the Angel says: "Write!"

—*Longfellow.*

INTRODUCTION

THIS play is designed to give to the world a simple lesson in honest building. No more appropriate words of introduction could be offered than Montaigne has given in describing the value of the honest motive which should accompany all constructive work. " 'Tis an exact life," writes Montaigne, "that maintains itself in due order in private. Every one may juggle his part, and represent an honest man upon the stage; but within, and in his own bosom, where all may do as they list, where all is concealed, to be regular—there's the point. The next degree is to be so in his house, and in his ordinary actions, for which we are accountable to none, and where there is no study nor artifice. And therefore Bias, setting forth the excellent state of a private family, says: 'of which the master is the same within, by his own virtue and temper, that he is abroad, for fear of the laws and report of men.' And it was a worthy saying of Julius Drusus, to the masons who offered him for three

thousand crowns to put his house in such a posture that his neighbors should no longer have the same inspection into it as before: 'I will give you,' said he, 'six thousand to make it so that everybody may see into every room.'"

If this play furnishes an opportunity to look more closely into our dwellings, and if, even in a degree, it enables "everybody" to "see into every room," "The King's Cupbearer" shall thus have aided—somewhat—in the ultimate liberation of the human race.

AGNES CHALMERS

Grand Rapids, Michigan,
Thanksgiving, 1916.

THE CAST

CANTICLE I

(In the order of their appearance)

HANANI, *brother of Nehemiah*
FIRST JEW
SECOND JEW
THIRD JEW
NEHEMIAH, *the King's cupbearer*
ARTAXERXES, *King of Babylon*
(MILITARY AID)
HEARING—*Wakefulness*
SIGHT—*Intuition*
TASTE—*Discernment*
TOUCH—*Faith*
SMELL—*Understanding*

CANTICLE II

(Previous Characters)

CANTICLE III

ELIASHIB, *the High Priest*
SEVERAL PRIESTS
MEN OF JERICHO

THE CAST (continued)

ZACCUR
SONS OF HASSENAAH
MEREMOTH, MESHULLAM, *and* ZADOK
SEVERAL TEKOITES
JEHOIADA *and* MESHULLAM
MELATIAH *and* JADON
UZZIEL *and* HANANIAH
REPHAIAH, JEDAIAH *and* HATTUSH
HASHUB
SHALLUM
DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM
HANUN
MALCHIAH
REHUM, HASHABIAH, BAVAI *and* EZER
BARUCH
MEREMOTH
BENJAMIN *and* HASHUB
BINNUI *and* PALAL
THE NETHINIMS *and* TEKOITES
PRIESTS
ZADOK *and* SHEMAIAH
HANANIAH, HANUN *and* MESHULLAM
MALCHIAH *(the goldsmith's son)*
GOLDSMITHS *and* MERCHANTS
ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

THE CAST (continued)

CANTICLE IV

SANBALLAT
FIRST MESSENGER
SENSUALITY *or* PERSONAL ATTRACTION
GESHEM
SECOND MESSENGER
SHAME *or* CONDEMNATION
CREEDS OF MEN
SLEEP

CANTICLE V

(Previous Characters)

CANTICLE VI

GROUPS OF JEWS
SHEMAIAH
WIFE OF SHEMAIAH
HASHUB
BINNUI
Previous Characters

CANTICLE VII

(Sanballat's Messengers)

PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT
PREJUDICE
HUMAN GOODNESS *and his and her dual self,*
SELF-PITY
SHIFTLESSNESS

THE CAST (continued)

HUMAN WILL *and his two children,* GREED *and* DISHONESTY
PERSONALITY
HUMAN EASE
JEALOUSY
IDOLATRY
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS
HURRY
PERSECUTION
ENEMY
LOVE OF MONEY *and his dual self,* LIMITATION

CANTICLE VIII

HUMAN BIRTH
THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL, *or* SILENT APPROBATION
MATURITY
DISCOURAGEMENT
DEATH
DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE, *or* HUMAN GOODNESS, *whose better self is* UNDERSTANDING

CANTICLE IX

IMPS
EZRA, *the Scribe*
TOBIAH
Previous Characters

THE CAST (continued)

CANTICLE X

(Previous Characters)

NEW CUPBEARER

CANTICLES XI AND XII

(Previous Characters)

THE KING'S CUPBEARER

Historical Sketch

The word, Nehemiah, is derived from the Hebrew, nek-hem-yaw, meaning "comforted of God." The word, Jerusalem, is from the Hebrew, yer-oo-shaw-lame, meaning founded peacefully, or, habitation of peace. "To be safe in mind, body and estate," one authority adds in defining Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, the Jewish patriot, was Cupbearer in the royal palace of Shushan during the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. During Nehemiah's term of service in the Persian Court, word came of the unfortunate condition of the children of Israel, the remnant, or returned colony, who dwelt unprotected in the unfortified city of Jerusalem. In this connection, it is of interest to recall that in the year 588 B. C., Nebuzar-adan, a lieutenant under Nebuchadnezzer, razed to the ground the city of Jerusalem, its Tempie and protecting walls. Moses had earlier predicted that, if in the land of their captivity

the children of Israel repented of their evil, the Holy City would again be restored to them and that they would then be able to rejoice in peace and safety within the protection of its rebuilt fortifications.

Nehemiah's sincere concern for the welfare of the captive Jews within the devastated "City of David" led him earnestly to request the King to give him a commission to go to Jerusalem and repair the demolished walls of the city. Having obtained this royal commission, the King's Cupbearer left the Persian Court, accompanied by a military escort, and reached Jerusalem B. C. 444, remaining there until B. C. 432.

During the first fifty-two days of the Prince's sojourn in Jerusalem, he rebuilt the city's wall, and although he was beset on all sides with discouragements and doubts, he faithfully continued his work until the fortifications were finished. During the process of the work on the walls, Nehemiah was persecuted unceasingly by the jealous governors of Samaria and the Plain region, Sanballat and Geshem and their accomplice, Tobiah. In order to defeat the purpose of his scheming enemies, Nehemiah set a watch "against them day and night." He supplied

his workers with both tools and weapons so that they might work with one hand and with the other fight against the foe.

This earnest Prince not only bore the mockery and abuse of those outside of the city but he likewise endured the condemnation of his own workmen who rebelled against the heavy tithes and cruel oppression of their rulers and nobles.

After the completion of the wall, the people joyously realized that they truly understood for the first time the Law, when they heard the Bible read by Ezra, the Scribe.

Although a solemn covenant had been made to "walk in God's law" by observing brotherly love, supporting the Temple, and avoiding inter-marriages with the heathen, after Nehemiah was called back to Babylon, all of these sacred vows were broken. In this connection it is interesting to note that historians give two views of this absence of Nehemiah from Jerusalem. Some writers are of the opinion that Nehemiah was called back to Babylon for punishment because of the accusatory letters Sanballat and Geshem sent to Artaxerxes regarding the Cupbearer's desire, or ambition, rather, to become King of Jerusalem. Other writers are of the opinion

that Nehemiah returned to the Persian Court in fulfillment of the promise he gave before leaving Jerusalem. The view is here taken that Nehemiah was punished as a convict slave, doomed to hard labor in the quarries of Persia during his nine years' absence from Jerusalem.

After this sojourn Nehemiah again returned to Jerusalem. He witnessed the ejection of Eliashib and Tobiah from the Temple because of their attempt personally to own the Church which is destined to serve impersonally all mankind. This royal Cupbearer beheld the separation of the mixed tribes from Israel, arranged for the reward of the singers and the Levites who had actually performed the work of reconstruction, and made provision for the perpetual care and support of the Temple. The view is here taken that these reforms which followed Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem were actually accomplished through the Cupbearer's surrender of all human power, which left him in possession of divine authority.

In all these ways, Nehemiah, "The King's Cupbearer," acted much as all others act today whose desire is to build rather than to

destroy. He knew that the practical and the ideal, the male and the female, must be forever united in the individual consciousness.

Possibly history will not bear out the license taken when the daughters of Shallum are made to appear as actual workers on the walls of Jerusalem. The appearance of the daughters of Shallum as builders; and the five women, representing Wakefulness, Intuition, Faith, Discernment, and Understanding, coincides with the tender womanly traits "The King's Cupbearer" manifested in the loving, motherly care he showed at all times for the welfare of the children of Israel. In his consistent desire to rebuild the waste walls of Jerusalem, and thus safeguard the remnant of the house of Israel, Nehemiah was, in reality, re-establishing for all time that quality of thought which Bernard Shaw designates as "an eternal womanly principle in the universe." Nehemiah's fearless denunciation of crafty malice in his fight against the governors of the Plain shows forth the courageous masculine traits of this Prince's noble character. Nehemiah fully realized that strength and courage, patience and intuition must be truly manifested by one who would become an honest, construc-

tive builder, and therefore stood earnestly by his work day by day.

In quoting the Psalms in this play, it is with the thought that possibly some of these constructive songs of gratitude came into being when the waste walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt as a protection to the city and its temple.

No more fitting tribute was ever given than that which history has recorded of Nehemiah, "The King's Cupbearer:" "His character seems almost without a blemish."

History confirms the fact that Great Britain, like Nehemiah, has throughout the centuries consistently continued to build the world's wall, rarely, if ever, leaving the scene of action. It is undeniable that the United States of America, likened here to womanly intuition or spiritual understanding, finally came to the world's rescue in the latter days of the first phase of Armageddon. Thus another act of the long conflict between the flesh and the spirit was ended.

In the same manner, America's hand must again steady the world's wall until the four sides of the Holy City are rightly reconstructed. These four equal sides are here

represented as Capital, Labor, Nation and Church.

In the final phase of Armageddon, all of those who see face to face shall have the joy of beholding the final defeat of human goodness through the mighty power of spiritual understanding. To this end, all men, nations and creeds, in this reconstruction period, are building together for good.

PROLOGUE

DESCRIPTION: *Two Prologue speakers,* SIGHT *and* INTUITION, *appear before a curtain which portrays two parallel paths winding up a mountain side. One path is the way of human experience, the other typifies the way of spiritual discernment. The one path is beset with obstacles; the other winds upward without obstruction. Both paths converge in the distance. (The Prologue is spoken by* SIGHT, *a man; and by* INTUITION, *a woman.)*

SIGHT

My friends, you know him well, this man of good
Who speaks to you to-night. Across the way,
Perchance he dwells from you. Earth's brotherhood
Comprises such as he. Yea, day by day,

You meet him in the street,—the man who goes
About his daily toil with hope and cheer,
A loving worker, he who always knows
The joy of building rightly in his task,—
This is "The King's Cupbearer." None may ask
To know a nobler one than he who serves
Mankind with just the duty of each hour.
This is "The King's Cupbearer" who deserves
The merit Love bestows. Truth's strength and pow'r
Be with each royal Cupbearer we meet,
And pass to-day, upon life's surging street.

INTUITION

Friends:
We are the King's Cupbearers,
As we go on our way,
Serving the wine of heav'n,
Loving all faithfully.
The cup Love gives is patience;
The wine, Truth understood.
The King is our God in heav'n,
Guarding earth's brotherhood.
Jerusalem is knowing
Man is nor bond, nor free;
Blest City, ever sowing
Seeds of true liberty.

The wall we build is justice,
Protecting men from wrong.
The temple, Church about us;
Love's anthem,—work and song.
The new birth comes through proving
Man is complete to-day.
Watching and ever loving
Lead to eternal day.
Sanballat is sin's malice,
The curse of peace and good;
Geshem, hate's poison chalice,
Drugging all those who stood
Bravely through storm and sunlight,
Ever through peace and war,
Staunchly at dawn or midnight,
Casting sin's curse afar;
But ever God in heav'n
Destroys the hand of fear;
Who understands is giv'n
Strength to endure and bear.
Who leans on understanding
Builds ever strong and high.
With the World's Wall constructed,
Salvation draweth nigh.
Dear Friends, may we be watchful
To aid all on our way,—
To build and to destroy not,
Blest King, we watch and pray.

*(*SIGHT *and* INTUITION *turn and walk some distance together. They finally separate, each to take a different path.* SIGHT *takes the rough path of human experience;* INTUITION, *the clear way of spiritual discernment. In the dim distance, it may be seen that these two paths converge.)*

CANTICLE I

REPENTANCE, DOUBT AND RESOLVE

DESCRIPTION: *The scene is a richly appointed room in Shushan, the palace, at the Persian Court of* KING ARTAXERXES, *in the year 445 B. C. The hangings of the room are of white, green, and blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The several beds in the spacious room are draped in gold and silver. The floor is a pavement of red, blue white and black marble.*

DISCOVERED: *When the curtain divides, several Jews are discovered standing in the center of the room talking to* HANANI. *They are engaged in earnest discussion.*

HANANI

(sadly)

There is no hope; the city desolate
Now stands.

FIRST JEW

Doth not one heed its direful fate?

HANANI

(wearily)

No one repairs the city's shattered walls!

SECOND JEW

Is no one mindful lest its fortress falls?

HANANI

The world has not awakened yet to see
There is nor Greek, nor Gentile, bond nor free.

THIRD JEW

Jerusalem is lost, yea, cast aside!

HANANI

(despairingly)

The city which hath been adorned, the bride
Of Life eternal!

(As these words are spoken, a stream of moonlight floods the room. NEHEMIAH *is heard praying outside. The words are distinctly heard, although the speaker is not seen.)*

NEHEMIAH'S WORDS

"I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven,—

That keepeth covenant and mercy
For them that love him and observe his commandments:
Let thine ear now be attentive,
And thine eyes open,
That thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant,
Which I pray before thee now, day and night,
For the children of Israel thy servants,
And confess the sins of the children of Israel
Which we have sinned against thee:

(The curtains at rear part, and NEHEMIAH *slowly enters. He is a very tall, dark man, wearing heavy black beard, without mustache. He is dressed in the robes of a royal cupbearer, olive green satin garment with conventional design of embroidery, and a wide shoulder sash of royal purple.)*

both I
And my father's house have sinned."

(Nehemiah I: 5, 6.)

NEHEMIAH

(earnestly addressing HANANI*)*

The Jews which have escaped, tell me I pray,
If they, left of captivity, are safe?

HANANI

(to NEHEMIAH*)*

They are in dire affliction, day by day,—
In great reproach; the walls are broken down;
Jerusalem in hazard stands; its gates
Are burning.

NEHEMIAH

(sitting down and weeping—to himself)

Before the God of heaven, grant my renown
May come, alone, through building up these walls.
Yea, every other task of mine must wait.

*(*KING ARTAXERXES *and the* QUEEN *enter, followed by a train of courtiers.)*

(The KING *and* QUEEN *ascend a miniature throne)*

THE KING

Were it not pity, Cupbearer, that thou
Shouldst seek to go about this thankless task?
The captives in Jerusalem art now
Endangered.
If any grievous plague hath heav'n,
Through centuries it hath been freely giv'n
To waste Jerusalem.

*(*NEHEMIAH *bows his head. He makes no answer. The* KING *summons messengers*

and gives orders for a seven-day feast. Enter several messengers who offer to all drink in various shaped vessels of gold. Royal wine is served in abundance. NEHEMIAH *approaches the* KING'S *throne and silently kneels. He then arises and leaves the stage, L. During the festivities of wine drinking, in which all join save the* KING *and* QUEEN, NEHEMIAH *again enters, bearing two jewelled cups of wine, brimming full. He presents these to the* KING *and* QUEEN.)

(to NEHEMIAH*)*

Thou art not sick
Answer me, is this but sorrow of thine heart?

NEHEMIAH

(kneeling and kissing KING'S *hand)*

O, King, live thou forever:

(sadly)

If I had
The gift of tongues, I might then tell to thee
The plight of those who in captivity
Now wait within Jerusalem. The place
Of all my fathers' sepulchres lies waste;
The very gates are now consumed with fire.

THE KING

(according NEHEMIAH *permission to arise,* NEHEMIAH *stands before the* KING*)*

For what dost thou then make request?

NEHEMIAH

(with hand uplifted, addressing the KING*)*

Higher

Than heav'n, let this, my prayer, ascend.
I pray thee, King,
Send me, that I may wisely build and mend
Those broken walls.

(The KING *turns and addresses the* QUEEN, *who is seated beside him on the raised dias.)*

THE KING

(questioningly)

How long his absence, Queen? When shall we sing
Of his return?

(Both KING *and* QUEEN *drain to the dregs the cups* NEHEMIAH *has brought. They return the empty cups to the Cupbearer, who places them on table, R.* NEHEMIAH *again stands before the* KING *and* QUEEN.*)*

THE QUEEN

(to the KING*)*

We shall not miss him

(kindly glancing toward NEHEMIAH*)*

if he can rebuild
Those walls that lie so desolate. Stilled

Shall our sorrow be till he return.

NEHEMIAH

(Stepping forward and kissing the hands of the KING *and* QUEEN, *as he kneels before them)*

I set a time to come; it shall be when
The waste walls of my thought are built. Yea, then
I shall return. Forget not that I go
Forth but to struggle with one deadly foe—
Destructive self—the self that rends, indeed,
All else save its own whims.
King, I may need letters to governors.

(KING *gives* NEHEMIAH *permission to arise. As* NEHEMIAH *rises, the* KING *hastily whispers directions to scribes regarding letters. The scribes withdraw to one side and take from drawer, documents which they present to the* KING.)

THE KING

(receiving the papers and handing them to the QUEEN)

(to NEHEMIAH*)*

My son, go forth,
And prove to all the world the mighty worth
Of building rightly.

THE QUEEN *(to* KING*)*

King, bless these messages, and grant the way
Of peace.

(hands letters to the KING*)*

THE KING

(Beckoning to five men in military garb, who are waiting quietly at one side. The men approach the KING*, give military salute, and kneel.)*

(to NEHEMIAH*)*

I summon officers to go with thee,—
This military aid.

(pointing to men and giving them the signal to arise. They all arise.)

NEHEMIAH *(doubtfully)*

God grant they be
Faithful to service, willing to obey,
And ever watchful lest I fall, the prey
Of foe.

SIGHT

(Stepping forward and warmly shaking hands with NEHEMIAH*, peering into his face and looking everywhere about.)*

Ah, look! My name is Sight. I'll try
To see for thee.

HEARING

(listening—to NEHEMIAH*)*

Hark! I am Hearing. I
Will hear for thee.

TOUCH

(touching everything and bowing —to NEHEMIAH*)*

My name is Touch. I do
Discern all things.

TASTE

(*tasting wine, proudly—to* NEHEMIAH)

My name is Taste. I, too,
Teach thee discernment and delight,—a taste
Of better things.

SMELL

(*sniffing the air—to* NEHEMIAH)

My name is Smell.

(*with importance*)

I waste
All time on niceties.

NEHEMIAH

(*sizing up the men, disapprovingly*)

Are these, my King,
The best thou hast?

THE KING

(*to* NEHEMIAH, *eager to explain*)

They are trained.

NEHEMIAH

(*disapprovingly—to* KING)

I would fling

Their training all aside if I might be
Protected by my better self.

THE KING

(regarding the five men sadly
—to NEHEMIAH)

I know

(shaking his head)

Just what thou fear'st, and, yet, no earthly foe
Is conquered without them.

NEHEMIAH

(as if he would reject the aid of the men)

And, yet, to me
These soldiers stand for trained hypocrisy.
(NEHEMIAH *draws back from the five men who crowd about him. They endeavor to stand as his body guard.*)
No conquest save the conquest over each
And every one of them!

(sadly regarding the five men)

No vict'ry won
Save by self's transformation!

(to the five men)

Friends, to reach
My better self, I must discard, indeed,
All thou dost cherish.

THE KING

(in a quandary—to himself)

I am perplexed!

THE QUEEN

(*eagerly, to* KING)

King, grant that I may say
One word of peace.

(*indicating the five men*)

These men in higher form
Have oft appeared to keep our Court from harm.

(*to* NEHEMIAH, *with deep conviction*)

They can protect thee; if thou wouldst but see
Their true selves, they will help to set thee free.

NEHEMIAH

(*to* KING *and* QUEEN)

If they

(*indicating five men*)

have higher form, blest Queen and King,
I trust them, then, to guard from suffering
Thy servant.

(*bowing and indicating himself*)

SIGHT

(*proudly, to* NEHEMIAH)

I have been trained everywhere
To gain my present worth. I go, my friend,
With thee.

NEHEMIAH

(again shrinking back from the five men as if he could not go with them—to SIGHT)

Thou speakest proudly, Sir, I dare
Not enter with thee in this task I do.

SIGHT

(eagerly to NEHEMIAH)

If I should reach a greater height, renew
My better self, wouldst thou then go with me?

NEHEMIAH

(to SIGHT)

Assured, indeed, that I could never see
Aught but the real through thee, I, then, shouldst go
With thee, Sir Sight, to conquer alien foe.

SIGHT

(to NEHEMIAH)

Then I shall stay with thee, for thou may'st need
My presence as thou conquer'st form and creed.

HEARING

(stepping forward, convincingly —to NEHEMIAH)

Have I not heard for thee in days long past?

NEHEMIAH

(peering long into HEARING'S *face, as if rec-*

ognizing an undesirable acquaintance)
Yea, ofttimes heard; I've ofttimes wished thou had'st
Not heard
(*covering his ears with his hands as if to shut out unpleasant sounds*)
The jarring noises of the fast
Revolving centuries!
(*as if brushing all noise aside*)
Would, I might cast
Their shrieking woes aside!
(*weeps*)

HEARING
(*pleadingly, to* NEHEMIAH)
Friend, truly, I
Will stand for perfect hearing; I will try
To put down self.

NEHEMIAH
(*testingly—to* HEARING)
Nor hear of foe nor friend
Aught but the best?
(HEARING *nods assent*)
Then, come!

TOUCH
(*stepping forward and addressing* NEHEMIAH)
I, too, wouldst lend
Thee faithful service.

NEHEMIAH
(*to* TOUCH)
Yea, I know that thou
Hast wrought good ofttimes, yet thy judgments now
Are biased.

TOUCH
(*proudly, to* NEHEMIAH)
I, friend, am trained to serve. Trust me!

SMELL
(*advancing and addressing* NEHEMIAH)
And I will warn thee when thou need'st to be
On guard.

TASTE
(*hastily, to* NEHEMIAH)
I gladly tell thee what is good.

NEHEMIAH
(*looking at the five men, sadly*)
And yet, not one of you has understood!

ALL
(*incredulously*)
Not one of us has understood?

NEHEMIAH (*to* SIGHT)
Not in thy present form. 'Tis very true
Each is well trained to serve.
(*indicating all*)
Yea, there are few
Their equals!

(again addressing SIGHT*)*
Still they are so incomplete
I dare not go with them!
(drawing back)
I dare not meet
(addressing all)
—With just their aid, alone,—I dare not go—
(addressing all)
With them alone—to conquer self, the foe
That doth resist the longest.
SIGHT *(loudly—to all)*
Men, awake
(indicating all the men)
Your better selves.
THE KING
(to NEHEMIAH*)*
Our Queen says they have better selves.
(indicating men)
I know
She truly speaks; thou may'st safely go
With these five, well-trained men.
THE QUEEN
(indicating men)
They always take
On higher forms whenever the command
Is giv'n.
THE FIVE MEN
(together)

We offer as a pledge our hand,
(*all extend hand to* NEHEMIAH)
In honor; if thou need'st us, thou shalt see
We will be present, friend, to set thee free
From self.

NEHEMIAH
(*to five men*)

Dear friends, I trust you as we go
Forth to redeem all captives from the foe
Of self.
(*instructing the men*)
Mark, God's own word each man must speak!
Remember well, the fall'n and the weak
Look up in pray'r to us. God grant we may
Judge righteous judgment.
(*with bowed head*)
Let us watch and pray
For wisdom.

SMELL
(to all)

Let us ever faithful be!
Till Israel's remnant shall be truly free.

NEHEMIAH

Through understanding, all the sons of men,
All nations, churches will be one again.
When Israel's remnant is restored, the leav'n
Of lasting peace to all the world is giv'n.

(*to the five*)

Speak up, my men, and tell me, dost thou know
That good must aid us daily as we go
Forth to our tasks?

(*to* KING *and* QUEEN)

I go, blest King and Queen,
With these,

(*indicating men*)

thy messengers. Grant they redeem
Me from dread sin and fear, until I see
I am nor Greek, nor Gentile, bond nor free,
Nor male, nor female, in the task I do.

(*joyously*)

We shall redeem the remnant. Captive Jew
Shall be set free! Now I may go, indeed,

(*gathering men closely to him*)

with these.
Our Father knows our every need.

THE KING

(*handing the letters to* NEHEMIAH)

Go forth, thou Cupbearer of earthly King,
Go forth, and let the world in gladness ring
With all thine overcomings.

May these

(*indicating letters*)

Bring thee peace.

NEHEMIAH

(*with firm resolve*)

The city of my fathers' sepulchres must be rebuilt!
It ofttimes seems a struggle to begin
To cleanse one's thought from cursed fear and sin.
I long to go, and yet,

(*as if weakening in his resolve*)

I am afraid.

(*with firmness*)

Ah, no, God hath made all things that were made,
And called them "good" and "very good."
Blest King,
I go

(*resolutely*)

to conquer sin and suffering.

(NEHEMIAH *steps forward and kneels a moment before the* KING *and* QUEEN *for a blessing.*)

THE KING AND QUEEN

(*together to* NEHEMIAH)

Our blessing, Son, the Court of Persia gives
Thee full commission. Go! Earth's captive lives!

(KING *and* QUEEN *give command for* NEHEMIAH *to rise*)

NEHEMIAH

(*Rising, to All as if in prayer, with hands outstretched. The five men stand close to* NEHEMIAH *while the* KING *and* QUEEN *and Court listen with bowed heads.*)

"O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear
Be attentive to the pray'r of thy servant,
And to the pray'r of thy servants, who desire
To fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee,
Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy
In the sight of this man.
(*indicating* KING)
For I was the king's cupbearer."
(Nehemiah 1:11.)

CANTICLE II

AN EVENING OF ENCOURAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION: *The scene shows the moon, under a half cloud, shedding light upon the waste walls of Jerusalem. The scene is laid in a valley. The dragon well and the dung port are near. A brook runs close by. A most disconsolate aspect. The gates of the wall have all been consumed with fire.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH *and the five men,* SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING, *are standing together, viewing with cheerful countenances the most disconsolate of places, —Jerusalem's devastated walls. They walk together, as if on a tour of inspection, until they come to the gate*

of the fountain and the King's pool. A beast passes under this gate.

NEHEMIAH

"Ye see the distress that we are in,
How Jerusalem lieth waste,
And the gates thereof are burned with fire:
Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem,
That we be no more a reproach."
(Nehemiah 2:17.)
E'en through this dire distress, I seem to be
Encouraged to press on and set men free.

SIGHT

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

The hand of God hath dealt so well with thee.
The King's words bless us. With sincerity
We go about this task.

NEHEMIAH

(*to the five men*)

Come, let us rise
And build these walls aright.

TOUCH

(*joyously, to* NEHEMIAH)

Let us surprise
The rulers, priests, and nobles with a wall
That never can be shattered, never fall.

TASTE

(*to all*)

We are despised, yea, laughed to scorn, and yet,
We, too, may build what multitudes forget
Not, nor despise.

SMELL

Let us build high—
High unto heav'n, that he who passeth by
May mark the remnant now is safe, indeed,
Within these walls.

HEARING

Where never form, nor human creed
May enter.

NEHEMIAH

(*approvingly to all*)

Thou hast grown wise, my friends; yea, thou dost speak
Words of true wisdom. All the lonely, weak
And weary ones of earth shall be redeemed.
Thou art much nobler than thou e'er hast seemed.
I say again, thou hast grown wise; and high
Above thy former selves.

SIGHT

(*meekly, to* NEHEMIAH)

And, if we try
We may grow higher in this thing we do.

HEARING

We may put off the old man for the new.

NEHEMIAH

(*to all*)

My men, I see a change in thee.

THE FIVE MEN

(*together*)

'Tis true!

NEHEMIAH

(*to all*)

My friends, I doubted thee, but now I see
Thou, trained in things of God, may'st set men free
From self.

THE FIVE MEN

(*together*)

'Tis true, we, trained in things of good,
Free thee and all earth's weary brotherhood.

NEHEMIAH

Then I must trust thy better selves, indeed,
In all this reconstruction. Friends, we need
To stand together.

THE FIVE MEN

(*together*)

Friend, nor lust, nor greed
Shall turn us back.

NEHEMIAH

(*to all*)

These broken walls shall be
Redeemed—this is God's work for you and me;
And, as we work, God's truth shall bring to light
Our better selves.

THE FIVE MEN
(*together*)

God give us grace and might!

NEHEMIAH
(*with hands outstretched—to the five*)

Remember well, ye men, that which I say,
The God in heav'n always points the way
Of him who builds for others.

THE FIVE MEN
(*together*)

He doeth well!

NEHEMIAH
(*to all*)

And yet he may not ever boast nor tell
Of what he builds. Ye have no portion, right,
Within Jerusalem. No fearful right
Of ownership may enter in thy work.
Come, let us build.

THE FIVE MEN
(*together*)

Let not one of us shirk
Our duty.

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

I, Cupbearer, lead thee forth.

THE FIVE MEN

(earnestly)

O, may our work alone speak of our worth.

(At this moment, the appearance of the men changes. The dark garments they are wearing fall to the ground, showing bright, soft robes of ethereal nature. The men take on the forms of women as they stand in the moonlight, which has now become bright.)

NEHEMIAH

(beholding all with radiant countenance)

Ah, I have thought that thou wert men. I see
The woman in thee now!

(peering into their faces)

(to HEARING)

And thou, dear Wakefulness, forever true
To highest good art thou. I scarcely knew
That thou wert male and female.

(to Sight)

Thou, Sight, art Intuition in disguise,—
No wonder that thou hast discerning eyes.

(*to* TOUCH)

Thou, Touch, art Faith. 'Tis ever very
well
Thou know'st events before the world can
tell
They have begun; yea, friend, through hope
and trust.
Blest Faith, thy ways are ever true and just!

(*to* TASTE)

Discernment, thou art joyous woman, too,
And male, as well; thou dost, indeed, renew
The youth of those who follow thee aright.

(*to* SMELL)

Dear Understanding, leading on to day.

(as if in prophecy)

In years to come, thou wilt point out the way
Of Life eternal for all creeds and men.
Thou shalt arise a woman-country, free
From self. A war-torn world shall see
When Understanding comes, all nations then
Shall dwell in peace, yea, men shall love,
indeed.
When Understanding comes, Love is earth's
creed.

(to all)

(*looking closely*)

Ah, I see
The woman in thee now.

Friends, this is well, for thou wilt need to be
Both male and female in this task ye do,—
Complete and satisfied. Each captive Jew,
When wakened, shall behold nor bond nor free
Is he, indeed. The courage of the male
Is his, and woman's gentle tenderness;
Complete and satisfied, he cannot fail.
Yea, Israel's captives, still, shall richly bless
All men. They shall behold God's husbandry;
Wedded to Truth, all men shall then be free.
Ofttimes, my friends, a task at first seems light,
Though it loom large, indeed, to finite sight.
Be not fair weather friends. Stay thou and fight
When fall discouragement and darkest night,—
Through fiercest battle stay and win,—for right.
"The God of heav'n, he will prosper us."

CANTICLE III

HONEST DAILY NEEDS
THE TRANSFIGURATION OF LABOR

DESCRIPTION: *A morning scene, showing a vast army of men ready for work on the waste walls of Jerusalem.*

DISCOVERED: *Eager groups of men carrying tools, the daughters of Shallum and Understanding.*

ELIASHIB (the High Priest)
(*beckoning to several priests*)
Come, brethren, let us build this sheep gate well.

SEVERAL PRIESTS
(*together*)
And sanctify it to the Lord of Hosts.

MEN OF JERICHO
(*building and speaking together*)
What we have builded, future ages tell.

ZACCUR
Not one stroke of our hammers can be lost.

SONS OF HASSENAAH
(*working at fish gate*)

We lay the beams thereof; the doors are set;
The locks thereof, the bars thereof are fast.

MEREMOTH, MESHULLAM, *and* ZADOK
(*together*)

We work that no one ever can forget.

SEVERAL TEKOITES

And we that peace and truth forever last.

JEHOIADA *and* MESHULLAM
(*working together at the old gate*)

We lay each beam thereof, and set each door.

MELATIAH *and* JADON
(*together*)

We work nor ask for any blessing more.

UZZIEL *and* HANANIAH
(*working on the broad wall*)

The broad wall must be perfect, too, that we
May see them safe in their captivity.

REPHAIAH, JEDAIAH *and* HATTUSH
(*working*)

May see *them* safe, and who are they?

MALCHIJAH *and* HASHUB
(*repairing the tower of the furnaces*)

Each vagrant thought that hath become the prey
Of self.

SHALLUM

(*the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, working with his daughters*)

I came here with my daughters, they who rule
And work with me. Each one with her own tool
Is building.

(*the women drive nails*)

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

(*together*)

We came that all may see
The utter helplessness, futility,
Of those who come disguised as helpers, when
The news of reconstruction reaches men.

HANUN

(*repairing the valley gate*)

Sanballat and Geshem, the ones you fear,
Daughters of Shallum?

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

(*together*)

Not if we keep on building, tier on tier.

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

The ones we fear,—and yet why should we fear?
Since God is God, alone, and He is All—
Is just the cursed falsehoods that would tear
One's true self from its union now with good.

UNDERSTANDING

(She speaks but does not work with her hands)

Ah, yes! One must abide
Forever at one's work in peace to know
God's law aright. To conquer self, the foe
Of progress, one must build high unto heav'n
E'en for another's good; such is the leav'n
Of understanding, wisdom, power, might,—
All those who sit in darkness see this light.

MALCHIAH

(*building the dung gate*)

There is so much to cleanse from every thought,
I build the dung gate. All that I have wrought
Endures forever.

SHALLUM

(*repairing the gate to the fountain*)

I set the doors of this, the fountain gate.
God's messengers may enter, but the fate
Of those who come to rob is fixed, indeed.
No one may enter here with form or creed.

NEHEMIAH

(repairing the place over against the sepulchre of David)

My friends, Sanballat hears we build this wall;

The news has spread to him. "Ah, it shall
fall!"—
This is his dire foreboding. We abide
Forever at this task until we know
Those in captivity are saved from foe.

REHUM, HASHABIAH, BAVAI, *and* EZER
(*repairing near the turning of the wall*)

Never was work more welcome hour by
hour,—

BARUCH

Welcome, because it proves there is one
pow'r.

MEREMOTH
(*working at door—to the priests,
the men of the Plain*)

Courage, my friends, bear up, each day must
bring
Its own reward.

BENJAMIN *and* HASHUB
(*working together*)

Friends, let our hammers ring
(*all hammering together*)
In glad applause.
(*joyous, ringing music*)

BINNUI *and* PALAL
(*hammering together*)

No enemy can ever turn us back,

THE NETHINIMS *and* TEKOITES
(*working together*)

Those who would build for good can never lack.

THE PRIESTS
(*repairing near the horse gate*)

In learning meekness here, we may well find
No man upon this earth shall e'er unbind
Our work.

ZADOK AND SHEMAIAH
(*working together*)

If we toil on with love, we may renew
The waste walls with the fortified.

HANANIAH, HANUN AND MESHULLAM
(*together*)

We knew
Those shattered walls would one day be redeemed!

MALCHIAH (the goldsmith's son)

This broken shaft, it must be strongly beamed.

GOLDSMITHS AND MERCHANTS
(*working together*)

Courage, my friends. Together we build well.

(*Their tools fall. Ringing noises. The eldest daughter of* SHALLUM *slips behind each worker and, picking up fallen tools, restores them to owners.*)

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM
(*handing tools to men*)
Here is thine hammer, friend;
(*to another*)
thy trowel fell.
NEHEMIAH
(*to all*)
Beware, my friends, one cometh in disguise,
A messenger of foes.
(*to another*)
Keep well thine eyes
Upon thy work.
(*to all*)
Work as one man, work on,
Until each task of earth is fitly done.
(*to another, encouragingly*)
Work, till each task of thine is fitly done.
UNDERSTANDING
(*Pausing behind a worker and regarding his work and tools approvingly.*)
Be not afraid of thy salvation, friend;
Thy tools are clean. The nail thy hands doth send
Strikes always to the mark.
(*to another*)
This task of thine
Hath turned earth's water into royal wine
Of heav'n.

(to another worker)

When the marriage of mankind
Is solemnized in work, then shalt thou find
Love's home, and Church, Messiah's heav'n, Mind.

(*Passing to another worker.*)

I, Understanding, urge thee on, these walls of thought
Shall be constructed. All that thou hast wrought
Must ever stand.

(*To another group.*)

Work as one man, work on,
Until mankind is saved, earth's battle won.

(*To all, as if in prayer.*)

This shall be Labor's triumph through the years,—
To have contentment for its wage. No fears
Can e'er assail the man who loves his task.
He shall have all, yea, more than he can ask.

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

He shall have kindly service for each need—
This shall be Labor's reason, Labor's creed.
"Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, * * * *

And fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters,
Your wives, and your houses."
(Nehemiah 4:14.)
For I am Nehemiah, the King's Cupbearer.
And God, alone, is King of all the Earth.

CANTICLE IV

JEALOUSY AND DARK FOREBODINGS

DESCRIPTION: *A village of the Plain, representing a low order of thought. Everything in chaos. Rubbish of expensive materials h e a p e d about, showing carelessness and sloth. The heat of the day.*

DISCOVERED: SANBALLAT, *governor of the Plain, is entering. He is an idol worshiper and carries with him a ghastly idol which he places with foolish awe on a high pedestal. He is a short, very heavy man, gaudily overdressed in ornate colored satin robes and much jewelry.*

SANBALLAT

(*with sinister smile to the messenger who enters with him at L.*)

So they rebuild those walls—poor, foolish Jews!

(*Laughs a loud, derisive laugh, which is really no laugh at all but merely an animal ejaculation.*)

Bring Geshem here, at once!

(*With imperial wave of large, over-decorated hand to* MESSENGER)

MESSENGER

(*to* SANBALLAT)

Aye, Sir, I
Do thy bidding.

(*exit* MESSENGER)

(*Enter* SENSUALITY *at L. A woman of deceitful expression. One who has reached maturity, but still looks artificially young. She is dressed in flaming red velvet and wears many jewels.*)

SANBALLAT

(*walking across to the woman and chucking her rudely under the chin*)

Sweet lass, thy name?

SENSUALITY

(*simpering foolishly into* SANBALLAT'S *face*)

My name, Sir, is Sensuality.
I keep mankind in grim captivity.
As Personal Attraction, too, I come

And rob mankind of work, and church and home.

SANBALLAT

(*eagerly grasping her hands until the woman fairly winces under the crushing handclasp*)

Hold, woman, I have work for thee to do;
Thou shalt destroy each foolish, working Jew.
Strange how I always find the help I need
To aid me in the sowing of sin's seed!

(SANBALLAT *and the woman,* SENSUALITY, *dance briskly about and, at the same time, laugh loudly and wickedly. They plot together. Enter several messengers.* SENSUALITY *breaks away from* SANBALLAT *and, as if giving him an exhibition of her frivolity, she slips quietly from one messenger to another, leering wickedly into each face, while she hums a foolish, sentimental, love song. As she is singing,* GESHEM, *enters, L. He is a tall, heavy-set man, wearing the costly trappings of a ruler.* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *regard the woman approvingly as she sings. There are no words to the woman's song. Clashing, unrefined medley.*)

GESHEM

(*after* SENSUALITY *has ceased dancing, turns angrily to* SANBALLAT *and almost howls*)

Why have ye sent for me, Sanballat, pray?
I am a Governor!

(*With vast importance, while he struts about nervously.*)

This busy day.
I, too, have much to see to, much to do.

SANBALLAT

(*in low tone*)

Didst thou not hear how every captive Jew
Strives to rebuild the walls that lie so waste—
The waste walls of Jerusalem? Make haste
And give a plan to outwit all this task.

GESHEM

(*pondering*)

A plan? 'Tis simple! Let me think, I ask,
One moment.

(*Thinks and rubs his forehead.*)

SENSUALITY

(*interrupting*)

Let me go to them, I pray.
Each man shall bow to me. Yea, I will stay
The hands of those who work, through flattery.

(SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *laugh loudly.*)

SANBALLAT
(*delightedly*)

Poor foolish wench, thy wit is not half bad.
Our messengers will go with thee,
(*Summons messengers, who flock about* SENSUALITY.)
And had
We other emissaries—if we know——

GESHEM
(*Interrupting*)

Each Jew
Must be restrained from work.

SENSUALITY
(*thinking*)

If we know of any others, they should go.
(*to* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM)
Dear Sirs, I pray thee, let me bring
My sisters and my brother. Each has way
Of evil fully learned.

SANBALLAT
(*interested*)

Thy sisters? Give each name,
And I will judge.
And name thy brother, too.

SENSUALITY
(*proudly*)

The younger one is Shame.
The elder one is quiet, she is Sleep.

My brother, Creeds of Men,
There are but four of us, yet we can keep
Each Jew from toiling further on his task.

SANBALLAT
(*to* MESSENGER)

Bring hither her
(*indicating* SENSUALITY)
two sisters.
And her brother, too,
Grim Creeds of Men. They have grave work to do.

SENSUALITY
(*to* MESSENGER)

Say, I ask
Them to come quickly. We have work this hour
That will require united strength and power.

(MESSENGER *departs quickly at L.*)

GESHEM
(*turning to servant at his side*)

Go thou and tell those Jews who toil, that we
Desire to see them in this village here;
Tell them that we can help to set them free;
That we would talk with them. Tell them to fear
Not to come hither.

SANBALLAT

(*to servant at his side*)

Tell the Jews the Plain
Is waiting for them; that the ripened grain
And fruit of all our kingdom wait. Ah me,
Why should they for those in captivity
Still toil?

BOTH SERVANTS

(*together*)

We go, Sirs.

GESHEM

(*to servants*)

Wait until the four,
These sisters and their brother go before
To mark the way of condemnation, death.
Yea, let them go and rob men of their breath.

(*Enter* SHAME, SLEEP, *and their brother,* CREEDS OF MEN. *They quickly embrace* SENSUALITY. SHAME *is dressed in deep black and walks with bowed head as if fearing to look up.* SLEEP *keeps her eyes closed. She is dressed in a shadowy, vapory-like gown.* CREEDS OF MEN *piously mutters a meaningless prayer, while shaking his head in disapproval of of everything.)*

(*to* SHAME)

What canst thou do, thou sad-eyed woman, here?

SHAME

I follow Sensuality. Men fear
My very name. I am Disease, the curse
Of sin unfettered. Couldst thou summon worse
Than I?
My name is Condemnation, too. I stand
A cursed lie with men in every land!
My brother, Creeds of Men, doth rarely speak
Words one can understand, but all the weak,
And sinning ones of earth he doth condemn.
He disapproves of all the sons of men.
'Tis strange but Creeds of Men will shake his head,
In silent disapproval of the dead.
The ones who live on earth he knows must go
For punishment through lust and want and woe.
I, Condemnation, know a day will come
When Creeds of Men will leave me,—then my home
Is hell!

GESHEM

(*to* SLEEP)

And thou, frail shadow, canst thou, too,

Do ought to hinder any working Jew?

SLEEP

(*raising languid eyes*)

My name is Sleep, and after men have well
Been bound in chains by her,

(*pointing to* SENSUALITY)

and her,

(*indicating* SHAME)

I tell
My story to them, promising that I
Will bring forgetfulness. I close each eye
Of him who listens to me, and I claim
To be a blessing, but my very shame
Is covered. I am Inactivity.
My other names are Death, Inanity.

SANBALLAT

(*laughing loudly*)

Ha, Ha, I see, He, He, Ha, Ha, I see!

(*Waving them on.*)

Go forth, ye messengers and ladies fair,
And speak to those poor working Jews o'er there.
Bring them to us, or cause them to desist
From working.

(*Patting* SHAME *on shoulder*)

'Tis true, my dear, they cannot thee resist!

SHAME

I am the condemnation of all men.

While condemnation lasts, I know well then
I am secure, but when it is no more,—
Ah, how I shudder! Then the open door
Of death and hell awaits us.
(*indicating* SENSUALITY *and* SLEEP)
(*Regarding* CREEDS OF MEN *with fear.*)
All men will lose their cruelty and go
Into the Temple of the God of good.
Then Creeds of Men shall no more dare to name
These hopeless words, sin, condemnation, shame!
But Creeds of Men is cruel, ah, we should
Make every use of him!

GESHEM

Let Creeds of Men now speak!

CREEDS OF MEN
(*muttering*)

Fear, sin, hell, heav'n, punishment, want and woe,
Separation, old age, care, loss——

SANBALLAT (*interrupting*)

Go forth, go forth, go, go!
(*To* CREEDS OF MEN)
Ye spoke well, Creeds of Men, except of heav'n.
See that no hope of heav'n here is giv'n
To those poor, working Jews.

Ye muttered heav'n and, yet, ye cannot say
That word as if ye once had learned to pray.
Bind them, hold them, and drive them quickly here,
Those Jews, through flattery, or shame, or fear.
Go forth, go forth, go, go,
And see that Shame or Condemnation here
Shall watch o'er all these men until they fear
The eyes of everyone on earth below.
Trust Condemnation's second death and woe!
Go forth, go forth, go, go!

CANTICLE V

A Struggle With Self

DESCRIPTION: *Same as in Canticle III except the walls are nearly repaired.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH *and all the workers at their tasks on the walls.*

(*enter* FIRST MESSENGER)

FIRST MESSENGER

My Lord, Sanballat, Governor of Plain,
Hath sent me to thee. He would once again
Hold counsel with Cupbearer of the King.
(*Endeavoring to lead* NEHEMIAH *away.*)
(NEHEMIAH *draws back as if refusing to go.*)
Sanballat, sir,
(*insistently*)
has counselled me to bring
Thee to him that thou may'st together talk
These matters over.
(NEHEMIAH *draws back.*)
No, thou need'st not walk.
I have Sanballat's chariot.

(*All workers stop working on the walls and listen to the conversation between* NEHEMIAH *and the messenger.*)

NEHEMIAH

But I am doing here a great work. Answer why
This work should cease, the whilst I go to talk
With them?

(*Turning back to his work.*)

Tell them I shall ne'er walk
Nor ride to them. This good work must not cease!

(*A second messenger hurriedly enters, L.*)

SECOND MESSENGER

(*as if pointing to the Plain—to* NEHEMIAH)

I bear a message, too; I bring thee peace,
From Geshem, Governor, my Lord;
And he hath sent me forth to bring this word
To thee. Come down, he begs of thee to-day,
And talk this good work over, and the way
Of progress.

NEHEMIAH

(*firmly*)

Sir, no work was ever done
Through useless talk.

'Tis better, one by one,
That we should learn to work, and not to say

How we have worked. I cannot come today,
Nor any other time.

(*Turns back to his work; all begin hammering together*)

(*Enter a wondrously beautiful woman. She is* PERSONAL ATTRACTION. NEHEMIAH *is working earnestly when she enters, but he immediately becomes excited and confused. It is evident that he is doing poor work. All the time he looks admiringly at the woman. He drops his tools; the gate he is hammering into place crashes to the ground and, in its fall, tears a part of the wall away. Neither* NEHEMIAH *nor the woman speak. As if delighting in her conquest and* NEHEMIAH'S *failure to work intelligently, the woman smiles joyously and exits. With a disappointed expression, and looking ever toward the door whence* PERSONAL ATTRACTION *had departed,* NEHEMIAH *wearily takes up his work. Enter the five senses—*SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING. *The five men stand near* NEHEMIAH *as if to encourage him to continue his work. Again the woman,* PERSONAL ATTRACTION, *appears. She is more beautiful than ever in a robe*

of shimmering material. NEHEMIAH *gasps delightedly when he sees the woman. He tries to return to his work, but it is plain that his work disgusts him, and that he has eyes only for the beautiful creature who stands near him. The woman, seeing* NEHEMIAH'S *displeasure with his work, laughs joyously and departs. The five corporeal senses look heavenward as if in prayer. Again the woman enters. She is even more beautiful than before, having thrown a rope of wondrous jewels about her neck and a fleecy, silken shawl upon her head. When* NEHEMIAH *sees her, he ceases work entirely and looks unceasingly at the woman. He sits down on a pile of building material. The five senses bring him, first a hammer, then a trowel, then a joist. They try to encourage him to go on with his work but he refuses. He does nothing except to stare admiringly at* PERSONAL ATTRACTION. *Finally,* NEHEMIAH *gives one quick glance heavenward as if in prayer. At once the spell of mesmeric attraction is broken. In a moment's time, the gleaming robes fall at the woman's feet, showing an ugly creature dressed in*

sack-cloth. The five senses change again to beautiful women. NEHEMIAH *rises quickly from his reclining position and with eager joy begins his work. He intelligently repairs the large gap in the wall caused by* PERSONAL ATTRACTION'S *first appearance.* PERSONAL ATTRACTION, *now in sack-cloth, ugly and old, tries to keep* NEHEMIAH *from working. She goes to him, attempts to seize his hands and hold him with her gaze, but her efforts are all in vain. Joyously* NEHEMIAH *continues to work.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to the woman*)

God be praised! I know thy heinous name,—
'Tis personal attraction*, lust and shame!
Vain sensuality gives naught, indeed,
Except her costly garb of self. Sin's creed
Is always getting. It has naught to give—
Who follows sensuality shall live
No more.
Whene'er thou comest first, clad in the flesh
Of costly, vain attraction, ye enmesh
Thy victims; well thou keepest them from gain

* When Nehemiah perceives that evil is impersonal, the word typifying evil is not capitalized.

Of true salvation through thy crafty, vain
attentions.
The second time thou com'st, men loathe their
work;
Their days become a useless drag; they shirk
all honest duty.
The third time thou dost come, men cease
their toil,—
Thou bind'st upon them fetters, coil on coil.
The world of useful joy would pass away,
If thou, poor foolish creature, hadst thy say;
But as men lift their eyes to heav'n and pray,
The joy of work comes forth into the light,—
And thou art then a monster in their sight!
Go from me, woman, never, never more
Shalt thou appear to darken my own door
Of thought. My daily work is all I need;
My work is my attraction and my meed
Of joy and peace and happiness and rest!
(*as he pushes the woman away*)
Woman, for me, my work is ever best.
(*Discouraged at* NEHEMIAH'S *words,* PERSONAL ATTRACTION *then goes to the other men. One by one they drop their tools and half return her caresses.* NEHEMIAH *alone repulses* PERSONAL ATTRACTION *each time she returns to him. He continues his work. Not a word is spoken.*

Every time one of the workers drops his tools because of the woman's caresses, the daughters of SHALLUM *appear and restore them to the idle hands.*)

PERSONAL ATTRACTION

(*in final attempt to gain* NEHEMIAH'S *attention*)

Come,

(*whispering*)

Come with me,
I will give thee ease
And joy and gladness.
Wouldst thou not for these
Lay down this heavy anvil?

(*pointing to tool*)

NEHEMIAH

(*firmly*)

No, for I, Cupbearer of the King, must ever try
To do my best.

PERSONAL ATTRACTION

(*Gently stroking* NEHEMIAH'S *hands.*)

Thou art so brave, my dear.
It is thy bravery I love.

(*Still caressing his hands.*)

These wondrous hands! How they have wrought!
Ah, do not fear

My fond caresses.

(NEHEMIAH *brushes her aside and quickly begins work on the walls.* PERSONAL ATTRACTION, *seeing that it is useless to try to win* NEHEMIAH, *softly steals again to the other men, who are watching her with jealous glances.* NEHEMIAH *works on.* PERSONAL ATTRACTION *flits from one to another and casts her spell over each of them in turn. They rapturously return her caresses.* SHAME *and* CREEDS OF MEN *enter.)*

SHAME

(*to one of the workers who has been holding* PERSONAL ATTRACTION *in his arms*)

My name is Sister Shame. Each working Jew
Shall be inactive. Yea, let me renew
My boast. Not one shall work, for I
Shall make each one afraid. Each man shall try
To shake me off!
I, too, am Condemnation, which doth hide
Earth's sensuality. 'Tis true, this wide
World dreams not yet that I am all
That hath the pow'r to bind men with the thrall
Of death.

(*She hovers like a cloud over the tired work-*

ers; with one hand she summons SLEEP.)
Come, Creeds of Men; come, Sister Sleep,
My work is finished!
(*The hands of the men drop listlessly.*)
Now I pray thee keep
These hands from toiling, and these eyes
from light.
My work is finished!
(The men drop their heads in shame, while CREEDS OF MEN *shakes his head.)*

CREEDS OF MEN

Lead to blackest night
These earnest Jews.
Hell, hate, want, care, separation, loss, grief!
(SLEEP *approaches the men. They reach out their arms to her as if begging her to come to them. They yawn stupidly and sigh.*)

SLEEP

(*surprised*)

I—I have naught to do!
Shame, Sensuality, hath bound each Jew!
While Creeds of Men condemn their soul to
hell,
Each one has worked so valiantly and well!
(*They all nod their heads in sleep except the daughters of* SHALLUM *and* NEHEMIAH, *who work diligently on. The eldest daugh-*

ter of SHALLUM *approaches* NEHEMIAH. *He is so busily engaged in work that he has not noticed the sleeping toilers.*)

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Cupbearer, awake those stupid Jews who sleep!

NEHEMIAH

(*regarding the sleepers*)

Our God shall fight for us.
Yea, He shall keep
Our hands from idleness.

(*to* DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM)

The trumpet sound!

(*Loud blowing of trumpet.*)

They shall awake!

(*Men begin to awaken.*)

Their better selves when found
Shall keep them. Daughters, tell them they shall be
Both male and female, joyous, sinless, free.

(DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM *go quickly and awaken the men more fully, merely by placing the workers' own discarded weapons and tools in their listless hands.*)

(*All the men arise, look about in startled manner and continue the work quietly.*

With a spear in one hand and a weapon in the other, each daughter of SHALLUM *stands back of every group of men as a faithful guard. Enter* UNDERSTANDING.)

UNDERSTANDING

Tell them,

(*to* DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM)

I pray thee, each with servant may
At night lodge in Jerusalem. The way
Grows brighter. Toilers, we are not afraid.
God hath made "good" all things that He hath made.
A day will come when men shall no more fear
Vain sensuality. Yea, we shall hear
No cursing and no condemnation then.
The Father knows this hour; it shall be when
Earth's final condemnation for sin's lie
Brings no more sensual curse.
Stilled is the cry of shame.
Remorse and fear shall not be heard.
We shall have no more sleep or death. God's word
Will raise the dead, and silence human strife.
When condemnation ceases, all is Life.

NEHEMIAH

(NEHEMIAH *rises suddenly, as if with inspiration and looks searchingly at first one messenger and then another. The*

outer garment each messenger is wearing drops away. Exit CREEDS OF MEN.)

This messenger
(*indicating* SANBALLAT'S *messenger*)
that we have dreaded, see!
Is Intuition in disguise; was she
Not Sight?

INTUITION

The ills we deem dark woes may be,
When overcome, a guide to lead to light.

NEHEMIAH

(*shaking second messenger until outer covering falls*)

And this one, well thou know'st, was one time Taste.
Thou art not Shame, at all, thou comest here
To teach mankind to have no shame nor fear.

DISCERNMENT

And now I am Discernment.

NEHEMIAH

Thou, indeed,
Art messenger who teaches us to waste
No time in self-abasement.

DISCERNMENT

(*as if holding aloft a cup*)

Taste of life's cup,
Of grief or joy, let not this chalice pass!

NEHEMIAH

(*Looking* SENSUALITY *squarely in the eye; her outer garment falls, revealing a beautiful woman.*)

Ah, thou art Faith! 'Tis true thou troubl'st me
So long to-day as Touch! This is the curse
Of all earth's curses, mankind fears as worse
Than Death. The touch of Touch brings bitter woe
Because it claims to hold, caress, and go
From life to death.
Dear Faith, thine hands so long
Have groped for satisfaction! Now the wrong
Of sensuality can no more bind.
Blest Faith, thy ways are ever true and kind.

FAITH

Yea, I am Faith!
I best express myself by giving much
To all mankind.

NEHEMIAH

(*pondering*)

So thou wert one time Touch!
Can this be why, in future years, there is
Destined to come a King to earth?—and this
Shall be his message: Purity and Peace!

(*as if prophesying*)

The dead are raised with grateful words like these:
"Father, I thank Thee!" Men shall even know
The garment's hem he wears shall heal their woe.
If they but reach out for the Truth, they shall
Be freed forever from the galling thrall
Of sensuality, which comes to bind
Mankind with touch of finite love.

(*to all*)

We find
Our freedom, friends, forever as we give
Our all of gratitude that men may live.
This, then, is Faith,—forever giving all
Of selfless love to free men from the thrall
Of darkness, sickness, sensuality,

(*eagerly to* FAITH)

Blest Faith, there never has been love like thine,
That hath supplied earth's marriage feast with wine!

UNDERSTANDING

And now I come to bless
Earth with true understanding.

NEHEMIAH

Yea, 'tis true,
When Understanding comes, men will confess
That human goodness cannot heal or save.
(*to* UNDERSTANDING, *tenderly*)
Thou shall redeem mankind. The open grave
Of self is powerless to ever lure.
When Understanding comes, life will endure
Forevermore.

(*For a long time,* NEHEMIAH *regards* SLEEP. *She does not change.* SLEEP *constantly eludes the Cupbearer's steadfast, searching look. While* NEHEMIAH *is actually trying to "see through"* SLEEP, *and* SLEEP *is trying to evade the Prophet,* HEARING, *now* WAKEFULNESS, *dressed in loose, flowing white garments, slips quietly into the room, and takes her place with the other four guards at* NEHEMIAH'S *side.* SLEEP, *beholding* WAKEFULNESS' *appearance, shudders and makes quick exit.* NEHEMIAH, *turning, beholds* WAKEFULNESS, *and embraces her lovingly.*)

Brave Wakefulness, my friend!
Thou art the friend of friends which God doth send!

WAKEFULNESS

(*reassuringly, to* NEHEMIAH)

Blest Cupbearer, I come to-day to hear
For thee. There is nor pain, nor any fear!

NEHEMIAH

(*gratefully, regarding the five women*)

Ah, this one here

(*holding* WAKEFULNESS' *hand*)

is friend, indeed,—'tis she,
True Wakefulness, comes to us now that we
May keep awake and set our brethren free.

(*At this moment, heavy-eyed* SLEEP *appears again, L. She yawns stupidly; seems about to enter but is apparently afraid of* WAKEFULNESS *and* UNDERSTANDING.)

WAKEFULNESS

(*pointing derisively at* SLEEP, *who cowers to the ground and almost creeps out of sight*)

Sleep hath no better self. She hath a need
To hide herself! Death is her cruel creed.
My friend,

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

there yet are days of grief and woe
When death, or sleep, will try to make thee go
As fettered slave to hell—but thou shalt see
The world's great need of immortality,
And, seeing this, thou shalt, indeed, be free!

UNDERSTANDING

Yea, days will follow, too, when Love's high wall
Which doth protect a world shall all but fall;
When from false human goodness, thou hast turned,
The world and thou shalt have all thou hast yearned
For in thy endless, selfless search for good.
(*with hands uplifted*)
Then I shall come, and all is understood.

NEHEMIAH

(*to all*)
Half of thee hold the spears
(*to the women*)
Until each star in highest heav'n appears,
While half shall work.
(*To the men. They all return joyously to their work on the wall.*)
The way
Grows ever brighter to us. Father, pray
That none of us may falter, till we see
Man is both male and female, deathless, free.

UNDERSTANDING

(*As if in prophecy.*)
I see on earth, in long, long years to come,
Half of thee shalt, indeed, protect the home;

While half shall win earth's peace—this is God's will!
The home thou shalt protect is consciousness;
The wakefulness all men express shall bless
This earth-home with true, patient tenderness.
The intuition of our God shall be
Made manifest! Blest gratitude shall free
Earth's fettered ones. Yea, Understanding is
Prepared to lend to-day eternal bliss.
There shall be no more war, nor hate, nor strife
Within earth's home in heav'n,—this is life!
From human goodness each must turn away
And find eternal life, effulgent day
For all mankind. Blest Understanding's might
Shall make all nations one.

NEHEMIAH

(reverently, in benediction)

"Let there be light!"

CANTICLE VI

A Struggle With Poverty and Greed
The Transfiguration of Capital

DESCRIPTION: *The scene is again as in Canticles III and V, the partly constructed walls of Jerusalem. About six weeks later in time than Canticle V.*

DISCOVERED: *Groups of discontented Jews standing about engaged in angry conversation. Groups of anxious women and fretful children. The women wearily shift baskets of corn and wine from their arms to their heads. They sigh disconsolately.*)

SHEMAIAH

(*discontentedly*)

We, our sons and daughters, many are!
That we may live, we take up corn and wine.
Yea, we have borrowed money from afar

That this work might proceed.
Indeed, our fine
Of tax is great!

WIFE OF SHEMAIAH
(*sullenly*)

Why should this work go on, when, day by day,
Our debt grows larger?

MESHULLAM
(*kicking at wall*)

We have naught to pay!
(Groups of angry men walk about and kick at walls as if they would destroy it.)
We have encumbered vineyards,—all our lands!

MEREMOTH
(*fiercely*)

And this is all we have!
(*Pointing derisively at wall.*)
My very hands
Are wearied.

BAVAI
(*peevishly*)

I mortgaged all my lands—I
Have naught more.

WIFE OF BAVAI
(*weeping*)

I know it!

(*rocking back and forth*)
I know it! Ah,
I weep and sigh
But no one cares.

BINNUI

Yet our flesh is exactly as the flesh
Of our own brethren, our children, too,
And their children. Would we then enmesh,
Our sons and daughters, into bondage?
(*Angrily approaches* NEHEMIAH, *who alone continues to build.*)
Jew,
Speak up! Some are already bought
With no power to redeem
(*savagely*)
and thou hast wrought
This mischief!
(*At one side, an auctioneer is asking for bids on the children. The rulers make various offers.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*rising slowly from his work and towering above all*)
Not as they seem
Are countless ills to-day.
(*Turns to messenger and summons nobles and rulers who are engaged in bidding on children. They crowd about* NEHEMIAH.)

Men, I pray,
Listen, and find at once a better way
To meet each need. Thou dost exact in whole
Usury of thy brethren, and thy toll
Is death. Our brethren, the Jews, redeemed shall be,
Not in some far-off time, but now and here.
They, sold unto the heathen, shall be free
From cursed debt, disease, and human fear.
(*Shaking his clenched fists into the faces of the rulers.*)
And wouldst thou even sell thy brethren
For stupid ease? Quick, answer me, my men!
(*There is a long silence. The rulers and nobles stand with bowed heads, as if ashamed.*)
Shall they be sold for us; canst thou not say
A word—not even one? There is none, nay
Not one to e'er condone this usury.
(*All men stand with heads lowered.*)
(NEHEMIAH *walks back to the wall as if his words to the rulers were finished; he picks up an anvil and gives a few ringing strokes, and then suddenly faces about and paces his way back to the silent men.*)
"It is not good that ye do: ought ye not
To walk in the fear of our God because of
The reproach of the heathen our enemies?

I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants,
Might exact of them money and corn:
I pray you, let us leave off this usury.
Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day,
Their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards,
And their houses, also the hundredth part
Of the money, and of the corn, the wine,
And of the oil, that ye exact of them"
(Nehemiah 5:9, 10, 11.)

(*A long silence. The women are standing beside the rulers with baskets of corn and wine half extended to them. The rulers reach out their hands to receive the baskets, but as they listen to* NEHEMIAH'S *words, their empty hands drop back to their sides.* UNDERSTANDING *enters quietly and stands close to* NEHEMIAH.)

UNDERSTANDING
(to the Rulers)

Restore to all earth's laborers the gain
Of their true service. Give them all! No vain
Percentage, laid aside, can give thee wealth.
But giving all, thou shalt find peace and health.
In years to come, thou shalt have all to give,
Blest Capital,—then all mankind shall live,

And love and work and rest forever! Aye,
When men give all to work, eternal day
Shall dawn.

SHALLUM

"We will restore them, and will require
nothing of them;
So will we do as thou sayest."

(Nehemiah 5:12.)

NEHEMIAH

(*to messenger*)

Go, call the priests, an oath we'll take of this
That they should do according to their
promise.

(*Shakes lap as if emptying it of
something.*)

"So God shake out every man from his house,
And from his labour, that performeth not
this promise,
Even thus be he shaken out, and emptied."

(Nehemiah 5:13.)

UNDERSTANDING

In years to come, each nation shall rejoice
To be in loving debt to all. Truth's voice
Shall summon to the warfare of the earth
The sons of men to give their all. The worth
Of wealth shall then be known. Wealth
never ends

When men and nations dwell as neighbors, friends.
In lending all, one still has all to give;
Giving is wealth whereby all men shall live.

ALL
(*together*)

Amen! Praise the Lord! God be praised!

NEHEMIAH
(*with hand uplifted*)

At my table now I entertain
One hundred-fifty Jews:
The fruit and grain
Of governors we eat not. Think of me,
O, Lord, Thou God of good, Grant that I be
A faithful servant till this wall shall stand
A worthy tribute to our Father's hand.
"Think upon me, my God, for good,
According to all that I have done
For this people"—(Nehemiah 5:19.)

CANTICLE VII

A Desperate Struggle With Self

DESCRIPTION: *Showing walls completed except doors.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH *stands alone looking at the opening where doors should be.*

(HUMAN GOODNESS, *a large, florid man, a messenger from* GESHEM, *enters, unobserved, and stands close to* NEHEMIAH'S *side while he works.* SELF-PITY, *a deceitful looking man, stealthily follows. He whispers whiningly into* NEHEMIAH'S *ear as he works while* NEHEMIAH *attempts to brush him aside.)*

HUMAN GOODNESS

My name is Human Goodness. Ah, my friend,
I never hesitate gladly to lend
My aid. Geshem commissions me to say
He would reward thee for thy work to-day—
Yea, he will lavish all thou e'er could'st ask

For having carried through this wondrous task.
Come down to Ono, village of the Plain,
And he will give thee lands of ripened grain.
I gladly lend my name to every one
Because my title is so justly won.
Cupbearer, if it be to thee the same
We will be going now.

SELF-PITY
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

I, I, I, I, I, I do suffer so.
I, I, I, I, want, fear, death, pain, hell, woe!

(*Taking* NEHEMIAH *by the arm.*)

NEHEMIAH
(*Striking* SELF-PITY *as if brushing aside a troublesome viper)*

Self-Pity and thyself art ever one;
Poor Human Goodness, what hast thou e'er done
To bless mankind?

(*to* HUMAN GOODNESS)

In many guises, thou shalt come to me,
Proud Human Goodness. Till the world is free,
I shall encounter thee as women, men,
As creeds and nations. Why go with thee when
I know thy home is hell. Why go with thee?

To-day, thou comest, selfish, greedy men.
Thou next will come as women, and 'tis then
I must be on my guard. Why go with thee?

HUMAN GOODNESS

To get thy full reward. Friend, thou shalt be
A ruler.

NEHEMIAH

(*firmly*)

I have reward. None can tell
Save God alone, my recompense, how well
I am repaid.

HUMAN GOODNESS

But it is fully right
That governors should tell thee of thy might
And wisdom.

NEHEMIAH

(*hands raised to heaven*)

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son
of man, in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his
earth;
In that very day his thoughts perish.
Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for
his help,
Whose hope is in the Lord his God:
Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and
all that therein is: which keepeth truth
forever." (Ps. 146:3-6.)

(*About the middle of the Psalm,* GESHEM'S *dual messenger,* HUMAN GOODNESS and SELF-PITY, *slowly depart.* NEHEMIAH, *alone, again turns to view he wall.)*

SHIFTLESSNESS

(*sauntering in, walks up to the mortar and looks at it sneeringly—to* NEHEMIAH)

What is this? Ah, mortar? Then why mind
Mixing this so?

(NEHEMIAH *is carefully placing in the lime.*)

Cast it in!

(*Knocks* NEHEMIAH'S *elbow so that the lime slips carelessly in. Laughs.*)

Cast it in!
This will last after thou art dead and gone.
Cast it in!

(*jostling shovel*)

Cast it in, why stand alone
For such exactness?

(NEHEMIAH, *saying nothing, goes to the wall and carefully measures the opening of a gate.* SHIFTLESSNESS *follows him and jeers at him.*)

Never mind measuring;
Cast it in.

(NEHEMIAH *picks up the heavy gate which belongs in the opening.*)

Who cares how it fits?
Ah, bring
Thy talents to the things that count,—this gate
Is merely iron! It can have no fate—
'Tis lifeless metal! Though it fit not, why
Shouldst thou then care? Why shouldst thou even try?

(SHIFTLESSNESS *saunters about; carelessly knocks down one gate after another and kicks each about. Crashing noises.*)

NEHEMIAH

Ah, shiftlessness, we two have met before.
Thou may'st leave!
(*points to exit*)
I would not listen more
To all thy foolish prattle.
(*pushing him away*)
I am here
To do my best. Thou canst not interfere.
Of all the messengers that Geshem sent
Thou art the one whose crookedness hath bent
Men from the line of rectitude. Thy ways
Are not God's ways. For this, let Him be praised!

(*exit* SHIFTLESSNESS)

(NEHEMIAH *turns again to the wall. An officious woman enters and approaches him.*

She wears a very anxious expression. She is IDOLATRY.)

IDOLATRY

(*looking longingly at* NEHEMIAH. *He turns away from her with expression of annoyance and hatred.* NEHEMIAH *drops a tool.* IDOLATRY *picks it up and at the same time breaks a very valuable tool which is close at hand.* NEHEMIAH *angrily pushes the woman aside.* IDOLATRY *quickly measures a gate for him with no degree of exactness.*)

I idolize thee, friend. This work ye do
I would do for thee.

NEHEMIAH

(*much annoyed—to* IDOLATRY)

No! (*pushing her roughly aside*). Vain, vain Idolatry. Speak not to me again.

(NEHEMIAH *continues working, but at every turn* IDOLATRY *interrupts his efforts with over-solicitous attention. Firmly, to* NEHEMIAH.)

I shall not give thee up! Thy angry pride
At my attentions——

NEHEMIAH

(*interrupting*)

Go from me! (*angrily*). This wide
World surely furnisheth enough of space

So that I never need to see thy face!
I loathe thee! I despise thee, fiendish curse!
Of all sin's leeches, none was ever worse!

IDOLATRY

(*pleased at curses, smiling*)

I idolize thee! Nothing thou canst say
Shall ever turn my love for thee away.

NEHEMIAH

(*scornfully*)

Thy love for me! Thou hind'r'st all I do!
Thy love for me! No word of this is true!
Thy useless, harmful hindrances I hate!

IDOLATRY

Ah, I am used to curses. Yea, I wait
For thy attentions——

NEHEMIAH

(*interrupting*)

My attentions! *No!*
Thou shalt have none from me—thou woman, go!

(IDOLATRY *brings a heavy mantle and wraps it closely about* NEHEMIAH *so that he cannot lift his hands to his work. With great effort, he casts the cloak aside.*)

IDOLATRY

(*trying again to wrap the mantle about* NEHEMIAH, *who continues to cast it aside*)

Ah, it is cold, my friend, and thou shalt be

Forever blessed and comforted by me.
I am Idolatry, close Family Tie,
I shall not leave thee, dear, till thou shalt die.
I am the finite love of those who fear
For thee. I shall be ever, ever near
Thee all thy life.

(*She throws her arms closely about* NEHEMIAH'S *neck, clinging tenaciously to him*)

NEHEMIAH

(*with agonized expression, lifts his eyes to heaven in prayer. He makes no move to shake the woman from him, although he shows in every expression his longing to be free from her.*)

There is one God, above,
Father, I thank Thee that Thy law is love.
I thank Thee, Father!

IDOLATRY

(*loosens her arms from* NEHEMIAH'S *neck. With surprise, to* NEHEMIAH)

Have I heard aright?
Thou used to curse me, now within my sight
Thou giv'st thanks!

NEHEMIAH

(*unconscious of* IDOLATRY)

Father of love, I thank Thee!

IDOLATRY

(*as if determined to win* NEHEMIAH'S *at-*

tentions. Peering into his face)
Dear, dost thou see me, too?
Give me thy curses, love, pray do, pray do!

NEHEMIAH

(*refusing to see* IDOLATRY)
Who is so great a God as the One good?
With Him, alone, all things are understood!

IDOLATRY

(*desperately*)
Hast thou no curse to give me, dear? My life
Is nourished with vain curses, idle strife.
(*pleadingly*)
Give me abuse! Hatred my portion is
Since time began, and, ah, I feed on this!

NEHEMIAH

(*looking heavenward*)
Who is so great a God as God in heav'n?

IDOLATRY

(*beseechingly*)
I need thy curses, dear, let them be giv'n
That I may live! Idolatry, indeed,
Feasts on harsh words. Scorn is her hourly need.

NEHEMIAH

(*patiently, looking heavenward*)
Who is so great a God as God above,
E'en though I dwell in hell, God still is Love.

IDOLATRY

(*clinging closely to* NEHEMIAH)

Ah, I am sure thou need'st me. Dear, I know
That I must follow thee where thou wouldst go!

NEHEMIAH

I thank Thee, I can see but God's own ways.
For all Life gives me, may I offer praise!

IDOLATRY

(*weeping*)

Thou praiseth me? (*sadly*) Alas! Praise me? Me?
I shall remain with thee throughout thy life—
As closest fam'ly tie, as mother, wife,
As thine own sister, I shall love thee so
That I shall keep thee e'er from pain and woe!

NEHEMIAH

(*firmly*)

That which God gives me brings nor curse, nor shame.
For all God sends me, may I praise His name.

(*Enter* UNDERSTANDING, *followed by* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* CREEDS OF MEN.)

UNDERSTANDING

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Thou fearest this is family! Alas,

Thy fears are vain since heav'n and earth
shall pass
But Love's true family shall stand for aye,
O'er this frail ownership hath no more sway.
(When IDOLATRY *hears these words, she wails and clings tenaciously to* NEHEMIAH.)

IDOLATRY
(to NEHEMIAH)

I beg of thee to make thy home with me;
I shall be with thee ever, thee, thee, thee!

CREEDS OF MEN
(shaking his head)

Alas, this is his family. The curse
Of ownership is true. There is none worse.
Alas, this is his family!

HUMAN GOODNESS
(drawing herself up proudly)

I never take one human step. I find
I am too good to mingle with mankind.
I have no family!

UNDERSTANDING
(to NEHEMIAH)

We yet shall prove to all mankind the worth
Of fam'ly. All the nations of the earth,
With Capital and Labor, churches, men,
Shall dwell together. Ah, the world shall
then

Be wedded. Then this very earth shall rise
To dwell within Jerusalem. Truth's wise
And healing word foretells that Love and good
Unite all men—then all is understood!
This is salvation, Christian unity,
Love's home, and Church, yea, this is family!

IDOLATRY

(*weeping bitterly, leaving*)

Base, cruel world, that will not grant me all
The curses and abuse for which I call.
I crave for these! When kindness comes I go
Back to idolatry, and hell, and woe.

(*Exeunt* IDOLATRY, HUMAN GOODNESS *and* CREEDS OF MEN.)

NEHEMIAH

(*with bowed head, as if in deep thought*)

A teacher came to earth, and said that we,
Earth's toilers, have one God and thus are free;
Thou shalt have no more gods than One, saith he.

(*Looking up as if wondering where* IDOLATRY *had gone.*)

Idolatry is gone! I murmured much
At her attentions! Ah, I loathed her touch!

(IDOLATRY *hearing these last words, again steps forward to enter. Beholding* UN-

DERSTANDING, *she shudders and leaves.* IDOLATRY *quickly drops back from entrance.)*

UNDERSTANDING

Now I can see that kindness changed to wine,
Earth's water. God be praised! O let not mine
Iniquities be called to mind! In deed
And word, let me be thankful that Love's creed
Is never murmuring, nor vain abuse.
O, may I have one God, and rightly choose
Whom I shall serve. One God is All-in-all,
And God is Love! Father, on Thee I call
To save me from each hind'ring thought of fear.
There shall be no more pain; no, nor one tear
Of woe, as we remember God's great love
Meets every need in earth and heav'n above.

(*Enter* HUMAN WILL. *At first sight, he appears to be a very small man, but he increases constantly in size as he speaks.* HUMAN WILL *is accompanied by his son,* DISHONESTY, *and his daughter,* GREED. DISHONESTY *is very cowardly in appearance.* GREED *is large and florid.*)

HUMAN WILL
(*breathlessly to* NEHEMIAH)

This will not do! Come, come with me, my friend,
Thou must come now. I say so. Wherefore bend
Thy back in labor when I summon thee?
(NEHEMIAH *is fitting a gate in place.*)
Not there! Not there!
(*Indicating disapproval of placing gate in that opening.*)
Come with me now. Why be
So earnest?
(HUMAN WILL *takes* NEHEMIAH *by the shoulder and pushes him about.*)
Go there!
(*pushing him to another place*)
Go on (*pushing him*) *Go!*
I said there! (*angrily*) Not there! There! There! *No,*
Not there!
(*Pushing* NEHEMIAH *about,* HUMAN WILL *appears to be utterly exhausted.*)
Not there! (*wearily*) I said so! (*Very wearily*) I—said—so.
(DISHONESTY *is attempting to displace good building material with defective timbers; good stones with mere lumps of sand*

which fairly crumble away. GREED *hastens about and picks up bolts, nails, tools and many other valuables and hides them in her flowing sleeves.*)

NEHEMIAH

Mark thy dishonest children, mark the greed
(*pointing to* GREED)
And avarice of her, and mark the need
Thy son, Dishonesty, hath now to go
With wiser vision or—

(DISHONESTY *stumbles and falls*)

HUMAN WILL
(*turning to his children*)

Ah, I did not know
She (*pointing to* GREED) was a thief, a robber; ah, ah, me!
And he (*pointing to* DISHONESTY) deceitful, crafty, tell me, can it be?

(DISHONESTY *picks himself up.* HUMAN WILL *weeps.*)

NEHEMIAH

Thy name is human will. Should I not know
Thy falsity? Hast thou not led me on
O'er crag and fen of self, in days long gone?
I know thy name.

(HUMAN WILL *still weeps bitterly. His two children steal quietly from the stage.*)

I know the weariness

Of thy poor counsels; yea, thy faithlessness!
Of all his messengers, Sanballat's curse
Hath never made of villany, a worse
Than thou. I know thee, human will; I know——
I know thy wretched leadings—Go, Go, Go!

(HUMAN WILL *continues to weep.)*

HUMAN WILL

(to NEHEMIAH)

I shall abide with thee, here, here, now, now,
Until thou goest with me, thou, thou, thou, thou!

(*with feigned gentleness*)

I do not want my way; come, thou, with me.

NEHEMIAH

False meekness, human will, thou dost assume,
Since in thy scheming heart thou hast but room
For self. Father, Thy will be done!

(*At these words,* HUMAN WILL *falls at* NEHEMIAH'S *feet.*)

With Thee,
I go where Truth directs. Yea, I am free
To go where Love commands! Yea, there dwell I,
As God's own image.

HUMAN WILL
(*looking up from the ground*)
Come with me. Oh, why
Not go?

NEHEMIAH
(*resolutely*)
I go where God directs the way.
No human will can have the power to say
Where I should go, or where my work shall be;
The God in heav'n, alone, instructeth me.
(HUMAN WILL *appears to completely flatten out on the ground at* NEHEMIAH'S *feet. He is wholly exhausted and, in his exhaustion, his tongue protrudes as if he were fairly eating the dust of the earth.*)
Thou art sin's serpent, doomed to eat the dust
(HUMAN WILL *is creeping away*)
Of cannot, do not, shall, and will, and must.

HUMAN WILL
(*muttering to himself as he creeps away*)
I shall, I will, I can, I must now go
Back to perdition, human will and woe.

NEHEMIAH
(*as if prophesying*)
One comes in future days to do God's will.
(*as if beholding someone present, radiantly*)

He stills earth's tempests with Love's "Peace, be still!"

(*As these last words are spoken,* HUMAN WILL, *silenced, exits by creeping away.*)

(*Enter* PERSONALITY. *He is a very large, clumsy, awkward, pompous man. He is constantly tripping as if over himself, and falling. He stands before* NEHEMIAH, *who is working, and suddenly falls before him.* NEHEMIAH *in turn stumbles over* PERSONALITY, *but does not fall. Each time* NEHEMIAH *stumbles and makes a misstep, some of his good work is overturned.*)

PERSONALITY

Here am I! See me! Here am I! See me!
Here am I! Can it be, can it be
Thou dost not see me?

NEHEMIAH

(*stumbling over* PERSONALITY, *but not falling*)

I detected thee!

(PERSONALITY *repeatedly places himself in* NEHEMIAH'S *way, but each time the Cupbearer sees the impostor and quickly steps aside to avoid falling over him.*)

PERSONALITY

(*exultingly*)

Why step aside for me? Thou art afraid!

NEHEMIAH

(*firmly*)

Ah, no, God made all things that were made!

PERSONALITY

God? I (*indicating himself*) am creator, I am wondrous, I——

NEHEMIAH

(*interrupting*)

Thou'rt false from the beginning, yea, sin's lie!

PERSONALITY

Thou callest me false, then I shall go. Not here
May I remain! I must have awe and fear!

(PERSONALITY, *much offended, rises majestically and exits*)

(*Enter* HUMAN EASE, *a large, very fleshy woman. She goes straight to the gate* NEHEMIAH *is working on, and reclines wearily upon it. She sighs.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to the woman*)

Begone!

(HUMAN EASE *sighs and rests more easily on the gate.*)

Begone!

(HUMAN EASE *sighs wearily and refuses to move.*)

What (*peering into the woman's face*) is thy name, pray tell?

HUMAN EASE

My name is Human Ease.

(NEHEMIAH *tries to move her.*)

With me, 'tis well,
Why should I move? I like it here—to rest
Is my one business,—that is ever best!

NEHEMIAH

(*Laughs long and joyously. Continues to work while he laughs happily.* HUMAN EASE *sighs, and sighs, and looks disturbed over* NEHEMIAH'S *laughter.*)

HUMAN EASE

Why dost thou work and laugh? Why work? Alas!

(*She rises wearily from her couch of building material and appears much annoyed as* NEHEMIAH *continues to work and laugh.*)

I cannot live with work!

(*Brushing wearily past* NEHEMIAH.)

Knave, let me pass!

(*exit* HUMAN EASE)

(*Enter* ENEMY. *He has almost the exact appearance of* NEHEMIAH, *except his care-*

less, insincere manner. He creeps stealthily about and wickedly tries to undermine all of NEHEMIAH'S *work. Several loud reports indicate that powder explosions are going on.*)

NEHEMIAH

Thou cursed fool! Thou Enemy of mine,
(*trying to push* ENEMY *away*)
Why dost thou come to ruin all my days—
Thou, hypocrite, thou traitor, coward, knave,
I loathe thy very face!

ENEMY

Hold, sir. Pray save
Thy curses!

NEHEMIAH

Curses?
(*as if questioning himself*)
Curses? What are they
To drive this Enemy of mine away?
(*looking closely at* ENEMY)
Where have I seen that face, that cruel smile?
(*seizing* ENEMY *and shaking him vigorously*)
I know thee now.
(*rubbing his eyes*)
Blinded was I a while
To whom thou wert. Thou hast my very face
With fear's contortions.

(ENEMY *makes ugly grimaces*)
(NEHEMIAH'S *hands raised as if in prayer*)
Give me strength and grace,
Father, ever to know my enemy
Is but the fear of self mine own eyes see.
Ah, enemy,
(*to* ENEMY)
I truly know that thou
Hath counterfeited me. Go! Now, now,
Now!
(*exit* ENEMY)

(*A woman, dressed in many dull colors, carrying a long cloak, enters. She is* HUMAN GOODNESS. *She is followed by* SELF-PITY. HUMAN GOODNESS *slowly approaches* NEHEMIAH, *and raising his calloused hands, looks at them, and shakes her head pityingly.*)

HUMAN GOODNESS
I cannot give my name. I came from one
Who tells me of the marvels thou hast done.
And not one Jew hath praised thee!
(*She takes* NEHEMIAH'S *hands very tenderly in her own and gently rubs her hands over them, as if feeling their callouses.*)

SELF-PITY
(*to* NEHEMIAH)
Poor hands, true,

Toiled long, in vain, for not one grateful Jew
Hath stayed to bless thee! Tobiah says that he
Would give thee his thanks in sincerity.
Poor hands! Poor hands!

(HUMAN GOODNESS *continues to rub* NEHEMIAH'S *hands. For a moment, he almost weeps, but quickly recovers himself, and snatches his hands away.)*

NEHEMIAH

(peering into HUMAN GOODNESS' *face)*

What is thy name? Where have we met before?
Thou hast annoyed me much in days of yore!
In countless guises, woman, thou art near
Me ever.

(as if discouraged)

Need I thy temptations fear?
Thou comest in the guise of every curse,
Pitying myself and others. Is there worse than thou?
"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down:
Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,
And—come—down—to—you?"

HUMAN GOODNESS

But thou shouldst have reward. Thou toil'st but they,

Those Jews *(scornfully)*, are neither grateful nor obey
Thy word.

SELF-PITY
(to NEHEMIAH)

I, I, I, I, I, I do suffer so,—
Hell, want, pain, death, grief, hate, sin, woe!

NEHEMIAH

(almost assents, but quickly turning away from SELF-PITY *for a moment, regards his work on the wall. Again turning to* SELF-PITY.)

What is thy name? Where have we met before?
Thou hast annoyed me much in days of yore.
(Turning again to the wall, he disregards both the women, and begins measuring, as he intones these words from Psalm 78:)
"Give ear, O My people, to My law:
Incline your ears to the words of My mouth.
I will open My mouth in a parable:
I will utter dark sayings of old:
That the generation to come might know them,
Even the children which should be born;
Who should arise and declare them to their children."
(In the midst of the intonation of this Psalm,

HUMAN GOODNESS, *weeping bitterly, stands before* NEHEMIAH.)

HUMAN GOODNESS
(*to* NEHEMIAH, *wrapping about her the dark cloak she carries*)

Let me be hidden! I did not intend
To give my name. I came disguised as friend,
(*weeping*)
But I am deadly foe. Yea, oft before
I have annoyed thee in the days of yore.
I come oftimes to pity, oft to blame.
I come as grief and sin and hate and shame.
I hide the form of every curse on earth.
(HUMAN GOODNESS *and* SELF-PITY *exeunt*)

NEHEMIAH
(*kneeling*)

Woman, thou hast no purpose and no worth!
God be praised! Magnify His holy name!
Once more, Thy servant is redeemed from shame.
(NEHEMIAH *continues his work. Enter* WAKEFULNESS, INTUITION, DISCERNMENT, FAITH *and* UNDERSTANDING. *With hands raised as if blessing* NEHEMIAH, *all leave.*)
(*Enter a shrunken, fearful man,* LOVE OF MONEY, *leaning heavily on the arm of a*

still smaller, shrunken woman, LIMITATION. *She is blindfolded.*)

LOVE OF MONEY
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Here, listen to me ! I have much to say,
This is for thine own good. I have a plan
For earning money quickly, and a man
Like thee would do so well, so well for me!
Come with me, I can truly make thee free.
(LIMITATION *interrupts, while* LOVE OF MONEY *slaps her rudely in the face.*)

LIMITATION
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Thou shalt lose all as I do, day by day,
I toil and scrimp, and wear my life away.

LOVE OF MONEY
(*eagerly, to* NEHEMIAH)

I have an income I will give to thee,
Gold in abundance, so thou need'st not be
Fettered by weary toil. Activity
And thou shalt part. Until ye die, indeed,
Thou shalt have money for each daily need.
(*The little man walks nervously about as he speaks, always dragging the woman,* LIMITATION, *with him. He is constantly taking papers and gold from his pockets that he may figure up the total of his wealth. He appears disturbed over the*

process, ill-at-ease with himself and the world.)

There is so much to gain,—notes, bonds, yea, all
Of lands and houses, mortgages!
(*eagerly*)
I call
On thee to help me with this mighty work.

(LOVE OF MONEY *takes* NEHEMIAH *commandingly by the arm as if he would lead him away.* NEHEMIAH *draws back.*)

LIMITATION
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Yea, thou must fail him. Thou must even shirk
The duty each wouldst grasp to earn—to earn.

(LOVE OF MONEY *takes quantities of gold from apparently inexhaustible pockets and heaps the treasure, alluringly, about* NEHEMIAH'S *feet.* NEHEMIAH *makes as if he would turn away from the gold, but is almost unable to do so.*)

LOVE OF MONEY

Dost thou shrink back, dost thou not yearn, not yearn
For this?
(*pointing to heaps of gold*)

NEHEMIAH

(*hesitatingly, addressing himself*)

This mortar, and these joists, I know
Must yet be paid for!

(NEHEMIAH *reaches out for the money. Darkness falls as he is struggling over the heap of gold.* LOVE OF MONEY *holds him closely by one hand,* LIMITATION *by the other. He is powerless to move.*)

To pay (*hesitatingly*) as I go,
Is all I ask!

(*as if justifying himself;* LIMITATION *sneeringly approves*)

(*to* LOVE OF MONEY)

God knows, God knows, this gold
Hath no attraction for me, but I hold
It precious—just—to—meet

(*as if trying to convince himself*)

my daily need.

(DAILY HUMAN NEEDS *come flocking in. Darkness creeps on.* NEHEMIAH *hesitatingly reaches out his hands to the gold. While the darkness deepens, he may be seen walking in the shadows away from the gold, and, as he walks, he prays.* LOVE OF MONEY *snatches up the coin and carries it to a position near the entrance. At this moment, the scene again becomes*

as bright as morning. UNDERSTANDING *enters.)*

(LOVE OF MONEY *beckons alluringly*

UNDERSTANDING
(to NEHEMIAH)

One comes in future years whose every deed
Shall prove the Father's infinite supply
Doth meet each hourly need.

NEHEMIAH

Then why should I
E'er falter in this work when God, alone,
Doth pay for every joist and beam and stone?

LIMITATION

I have no money. I have naught to pay.
I toil and scrimp, and wear my life away!

(NEHEMIAH *stands as if in prayer. A flock of creditors, representing, collectively, Daily Human Needs, come hastening in presenting their bills for payment. Beholding* LOVE OF MONEY *with his heaps of gold standing at entrance, the creditors believe him to be* NEHEMIAH'S *steward; and, quickly depositing their bills, they snatch up* LOVE OF MONEY'S *money and depart, each one saying as he leaves*)

DAILY HUMAN NEEDS

"Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy

brother; usury of money, . . . usury of anything that is lent upon usury."

(Deut. 23:19.)

LOVE OF MONEY

(*beholding that his riches have suddenly disappeared, despairingly to* NEHEMIAH)

'Twas mine, 'twas mine, 'twas mine, and now 'tis lost—
Think of the endless toil it cost, it cost!

(*Cries out loudly while looking where his heaps of gold had been.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*compassionately*)

Poor love of money, thou art richer now
Than thou hast ever been.

(LOVE OF MONEY *shakes his head.*)

Yea, now; yea, thou!
Thou, hast, indeed, no money now to love,
Yet God hath riches that ye dream not of.

(*Going with tender compassion to* LOVE OF MONEY *and embracing him. As* NEHEMIAH *embraces* LOVE OF MONEY, LIMITATION *creeps under* LOVE OF MONEY'S *long, flowing cloak and is lost from view.*)

Dear outcast, let me even call thee, friend.
Let this be thy new name, and let me lend
Thee all I have,—a thought, a word of cheer.

Friend, may Love bless thee on thy journeys here.
Grim Limitation, too, is lost. Though she
May seek to cling, she is no part of thee.
(LIMITATION *drops away from* LOVE OF MONEY *and exits.*)
Robbed of the useless dross thou hadst, I see
(*peering closely into* LOVE OF MONEY'S *eyes*)
Thine eyes are bright with immortality.
Such are thy riches, gold,—the light of youth,
(LOVE OF MONEY *straightens up; appears youthful and happy.*)
Love in abundance, yea, the gain of Truth.
Ah, friend, the harvests mortals daily glean
From their earth's losses! None hath surely seen
More wondrous wealth than this! My friend, my friend,
Thou hast lost all, and, yet, hast all to lend!
(NEHEMIAH *and his Friend shake hands. Exit the Friend, formerly* LOVE OF MONEY. NEHEMIAH *steps forward—with hands outstretched—while* UNDERSTANDING *speaks.*)

UNDERSTANDING

Ah, World, when Love of Money comes, the light
Of heav'n fades, and falls the darkest night

Of self. When Love of Money goes, the way
Grows ever brighter till effulgent day
Of Truth hath dawned. Then, never human need
Shall reach us, since the Father hath, indeed,
Met every one abundantly! Ah, World,
For centuries thou shalt be cast, yea, hurled
Within the maelstrom of earth's search for dross.
From self thou shalt be cleansed, until nor loss
Nor gain shall mar thy journeyings. Ah, World,

(as if in prophecy)

Thou shalt have all! God's ensign, then, unfurled
Shall make of thee one nation, strong and free,
Provisioned with Truth's immortality.
No limitation shall men find on earth.
Worlds shall awaken to the wondrous worth
Of giving all. Worlds, reasoning, shall find
There is one law, one Substance, yea, one Mind.

NEHEMIAH

(in prayer)

"Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them,

And withheldest not thy manna from their mouth,
And gavest them water for their thirst."
(Nehemiah 9:20.)

(NEHEMIAH *continues his work on the walls.* HURRY *comes in running. Dashes about stage, breathing excitedly. Rushes up to* NEHEMIAH, *and knocks over the gate which he slowly and carefully is fitting into place.)*

(NEHEMIAH *looks curiously at* HURRY *as he is dashing madly about from one thing to another.)*

There is no need for hurry. Ah, I know
Thy name. 'Tis hurry, worry, lack of time!
There is, indeed, no reason, no, nor rhyme
In thy existence. If thou wouldst not waste
Thy days, remember, hurry hinders haste.

HURRY

(*grabbing* NEHEMIAH *by the arm and pushing him around*)

Ah, friend, the time is short. This wall should go
Up much more quickly! Thou art slow, so slow.
Clamp that gate into place!
(*Seizes gate, it crashes from* NEHEMIAH'S

hand and drops down upon other clashing irons.)

Stand back, thou knave,
Canst thou not see the hours we might save?
Quick, bring that mortar! And that trowel now!
(*Harsh commanding tone.* NEHEMIAH *does not obey the orders.*)
Thou fool, thou knave, why falter? Quick! But thou
Art slow!
(HURRY *rushes about smashing everything*)

NEHEMIAH
(*calmly*)

I do not thy dictations heed. God's ways
Are higher than thy ways. My loving praise
Goes to the Father who now leadeth me
Beside still waters of tranquillity.
Of all the messengers Sanballat had
Thou art the one that makes mankind least glad,
For thou art ignorance which never once
Hath wrought one thing except,—to act the dunce.
Thou canst not curse my work, nor interfere
With my sure progress heavenward. The way
Of true advancement is to wait and pray.

The one who hastens on shall know calm
poise,
While hurry retrogrades with deafening
noise.
The one who acts is always gentle, still;
While hurry, doing nothing, tries to fill
The world with the importance of its ways.
(*Raising his eyes to heaven as if in prayer while* HURRY *rushes from the scene.*)
Father, thy active quietness, I praise!
(*A quiet woman enters and approaches* NEHEMIAH. *She is* HUMAN GOODNESS. *She is again shadowed by* SELF-PITY.)

HUMAN GOODNESS
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

I am thy Human Goodness. See, my friend,
I tell thee I have never seen thee bend
To evil. All these Jews, a crooked set,
Have wrought, indeed, but now they would
forget
The need of further toil. Just thou, just
thou,
Art worthy! Dost thou not see?
(NEHEMIAH *listens with pleased expression*)
Now, ah, now,
Thou canst!
(*clapping her hands gleefully*)
Come, then, Sanballat sends the word,

And Geshem, and Tobiah,—they have heard
How selflessly thou toil'st, and they would see
Thee well rewarded for thy industry.

(NEHEMIAH *leans his arm heavily upon* HUMAN GOODNESS' *shoulder, and slowly walks with her to exit. His feet drag as if he were very weary. Not a word is spoken.*)

NEHEMIAH
(*low voice*)

Yes, yes, 'tis true. I toil alone, 'tis true.
The world's great burdens fall upon a few!

SELF-PITY
(*whispering to* NEHEMIAH)

I, I, I, I, I, I do suffer so!
Hell, pain, death, fear, grief, hate, want, woe!

(*Just as* NEHEMIAH *is about to exit with* HUMAN GOODNESS, *he slowly steps back and takes his arm from her shoulder. He looks her searchingly in the face.*)

Thou camest here to mock the world and me.
Thou can'st not heal nor save nor bless nor free.
"I am doing a great work, so that
I cannot come down:
(*turns toward wall*)
Why should the work cease,

(*he picks up his tools and begins to measure the door openings*)
whilst I leave it,
and come down to you?"
(HUMAN GOODNESS *and* SELF-PITY, *turn dejectedly and walk toward exit.* NEHEMIAH *begins hammering loudly at gates.*)

HUMAN GOODNESS
(*at exit*)
(*addressed pleadingly to* NEHEMIAH, *who regards her disapprovingly*)
We have been friends in days long passed away.
Thy Human Goodness, dost thou remember, pray,
How kind a friend I have been unto thee?
(*pleadingly*)
Why dost thou, then, refuse to go with me?
(*mockingly*)
I shall return again to thee, my friend.
I shall remain with thee till thou shalt lend
Almost thine all to me. A world shall sway,
Rocked by my human goodness. Still one day
I shall return to curse thee.

(*As* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* SELF-PITY *leave,* HUMAN GOODNESS *threateningly clanks*

heavy chains. NEHEMIAH *pauses in his work on the walls.)*

NEHEMIAH

(*shuddering*)

I fear, alas, her chains. I must be free.
Yea, Human Goodness will return.

(*as if beholding a vision*)

I see
A whole world swaying, nations, churches, men,
Cursed by the curse of human goodness, when
Their need is loving more,—"Just unity,
And no questions raised." Through eternity
All men and nations, churches, yet shall stand
Together, leagued, united—yea, one band.

(*Enter* PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT, *a messenger from* SANBALLAT. PRIDE *says nothing. He struts about looking at wall. Whistles proudly.*)

PRIDE

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Splendid work! Marvelous! Indeed, I wonder, friend,
At all thou and these Jews have done. Pray lend
An ear. My governor, Sanballat, sends thee peace

And joy. He would, himself, convey to thee
these greetings.
(*looking at wall*)
Wondrous! My friend,
didst thou do all,
Thou and these Jews? It seems, indeed, this
wall
Is built to stand. I marvel at thy might,
Thy wondrous skill in building this aright!

NEHEMIAH

(*For a moment, he listens eagerly. A dazed, stupid expression steals across his face. With a gesture, as if pushing the words of* PRIDE *away from him, he speaks slowly —to himself.*)

"O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek
thee:
My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth
for Thee, ...
To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have
seen Thee
In the sanctuary. . . . . .
When I remember Thee upon my bed,
And meditate on Thee in the night watches.
Because Thou hast been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Thy wings
Will I rejoice." (Ps. 63:1-7.)

(*Enter a driver and golden chariot; a richly*

trapped beast. A footman and messenger are close at hand.)

MESSENGER

(*to* PRIDE)

My lord, I wait; and art thou ready quite?
If so, we'll journey onward, e'er 'tis night.

PRIDE

(*pleadingly to* NEHEMIAH)

Come down with me. Sanballat waits to hear
Thy mighty conquest over sin and fear.
Come with me, friend.

NEHEMIAH

(*resolutely*)

"I am doing a great work,
So that I cannot come down:
Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,
And—come—down—to—you?"

(Nehemiah 6:3.)

PRIDE

(*insisting*)

They wait for thee at Ono.

NEHEMIAH

Let them wait! I have a work. Yea, I know
It must continue.

PRIDE

(*pointing to wall*)

To tell them of this dost thou refuse to go?
Come with me to the village of Ono.

NEHEMIAH

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot
come down:
Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,
And come down to you?"
(Nehemiah 6:3.)

(*The driver slowly turns the chariot around; the footman, the messenger and* PRIDE *follow. They exeunt while* NEHEMIAH *slowly repeats*:)

"Why should the work cease, whilst I leave
it,
And come down to you?"

(*Enter* JEALOUSY. *She is a deceitful looking woman with face wreathed in vain smiles. She approaches* NEHEMIAH *and looks with sinister smiles at his work.*)

JEALOUSY

Why this is Nehemiah? (*with surprise*)
Long ago
I knew thee. We were friends, dost thou
recall
Those days in Babylon? I little knew
That thou wouldst prove a master over all
This mighty work!
(*Smiling with pained expression.*)
No one is more rejoiced than I am, friend,
At all thy progress!

(*As if trying to convince herself of her joy.*)
Ah, I am so glad
Thou dost so well, my friend; and if I had
My way, I would confer on thee all good!
I am not jealous,—all is understood
With me. No one could wish thee more than I
Of great success!

(*As if determined he should believe her.*)
So glad—so glad, friend! Why
This vast success?

NEHEMIAH

(*not looking up from his work*)
I know thy voice! Thy face I have not seen!
Thy words spell J-e-a-l-o-u-s-y. I have not been
Deceived by all thou say'st of my success,—
I know full well, thou lovest me no less
Than this work I would do. Go from me, go,
Admiring jealousy. Thou canst not know
The purpose of my days. Why shouldst thou tell
Me pleasing nothings of my work, when hell
Is where ye wish to drag me?

(*Lifting his eyes in prayer.*)
Ah, 'tis true
"Of mine own self, I do no thing," one prays,
In future years:

(*as if in prophecy*)
"Yea, I forever do
That which the Father does;" indeed, God's ways
Are higher than my thoughts.
(JEALOUSY *with poisoned, admiring glances exits*)
(NEHEMIAH *raises both hands as if he were fairly lifted up from the earth*)
Father, thanks, praise!
(*Four men enter carrying mortar-trough; after placing it, they exeunt.*)
(NEHEMIAH *turns back to the contemplation of the work on the wall.* PREJUDICE, *a messenger from* SANBALLAT, *enters, almost creeps about, and whispers as if frightened. Goes up to mortar which* NEHEMIAH *is mixing, and looks at it fearfully.*)
Some one has mixed this mortar wrong, my friend,
Sh— what have I said. I did not mean to tell
That shameful plot.

NEHEMIAH

A plot ye say? Pray lend
Assistance in unraveling it.
(NEHEMIAH *ceases his work and appears to be much disturbed.*)

PREJUDICE

Meshullam, Zadok, Ezra, ah, for shame!
I should not speak of this! I would not say
One word to turn thee from thy friendships, nay,
Not one word; but (*whispering*), 'twas Shallum said to me
That ye were hard task-master! Ah, I see
I have been wrong in telling this.
(*As if repentant.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*continuing his mixing of mortar*)
Alas, thy name
Is prejudice! (*pointing to exit*) Go! Thou may'st pass
Forever from my sight! Thou canst not tell
The light from darkness. Go, the gates of hell
Swing back for such as thee.

(PREJUDICE, *muttering, starts to leave.*)

PREJUDICE

I wouldst not turn
Thee e'er against a brother, but, I yearn
To tell thee how Hanani says that thou
Sh— art basely wrong—Sh, what have I spoken now?

NEHEMIAH

(*dropping his mortar mixer, he places hands*

over ears so that he cannot hear)
Of all the messengers Sanballat prides,
Thou art the falsest one,—yea, thou! Death hides
Behind thy muttered murmurings! Go now
From me—Ah, never more shalt thou
Deceive me, crafty, whispering abuse;
Thy name is prejudice, and I refuse
To listen to thee, coward! Whispering,
Go back to Hades whence thy lispings spring.
I shall rely on God to tell me all
About my fellow-man. (*lifting eyes*)
On Him I call
For righteous judgment! God, alone, is good,
And, in His sight, man now is understood!
One day, a singer comes to earth to say:
"Our feet shall stand" within Jerusalem
Where human prejudice no more hath sway.
"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."
(Psalms 122:6.)

(*Exit* PREJUDICE.)

(*A small man,* PERSECUTION, *carrying a whip of many cords, enters. He appears proud of himself. He glides craftily here and there and everywhere.* NEHEMIAH, *not observing* PERSECUTION'S *entrance, continues his work.* PERSECUTION *wickedly*

looks at NEHEMIAH *as he works and gives him a fearful lash with the whip on his back. The Cupbearer, startled, looks up with pained expression. Enter* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* SELF-PITY. *They say nothing, but stand solicitously at* NEHEMIAH'S *side.* NEHEMIAH, *taking a few steps, observes* PERSECUTION *standing prominently before him, and immediately the Cupbearer's expression of suffering changes to a look of relief.)*

NEHEMIAH

(*to* PERSECUTION)

Ah ha, I see thee now, thou gav'st the blow
That turned me from my work! I know thy name,—
'Tis Persecution. Yea, I surely know
That thou hast caused me all this grief and shame!

(*As* NEHEMIAH *weeps,* PERSECUTION, *stepping out into a more prominent position, appears to be most happy.*)

PERSECUTION

(*proudly, to* NEHEMIAH)

Ah, yes, I struck the blow at thee, my friend,
My name is Persecution; many fear
The grief and ravages I daily send
To those whose mission is to conquer here.

(*proudly*)

I struck the blow!

(*strutting about as if pleased with himself*)

NEHEMIAH

(*turning sadly to his work —to himself*)

He struck the blow! Ah, me,
When shall I from the curse of self be free?

(*These words are said discontentedly as if dissatisfied with himself and the whole world.* PERSECUTION, *turning quickly, strikes the Cupbearer a stinging blow, this time over the head.*)

'Twas thou,

(*turning defiantly toward* SELF PITY)

SELF PITY, who hath done this thing!
I shall not take thy curses! Suffering
Is not my portion!

(*again* PERSECUTION *steals up behind and lashes* NEHEMIAH *cruelly over the head*)

PERSECUTION

(*appearing boldly before* NEHEMIAH)

No, No, 'twas I who lashed thee,—
My name is Persecution.

(*pleadingly*)

Call me so,
And credit me with all I do!

SELF-PITY
(to NEHEMIAH)

(She wears a pained, pious expression. Her eyes are turned deceitfully upward. When she speaks, she whispers whiningly in NEHEMIAH'S *ear)*

Oh, how I suffer! How I hear each blow!
I, I, I, I, I suffer so, so, so!

HUMAN GOODNESS

No one has stood alone, unloved, as thou,—
Martyr of martyrs, cursed here, hated now!
This blow came from my human goodness!
I——

(NEHEMIAH *turns to his work. Again* PERSECUTION *strikes a stinging blow as if in refutation of the claims of* HUMAN GOODNESS.)

PERSECUTION
(interrupting, to HUMAN GOODNESS)

Ah, no, it did not! I will tell thee why
I struck the blow!

NEHEMIAH
(*to* PERSECUTION)

I scorn, indeed, each word thou sayest, knave!
And call thee not by name that thou wouldst crave.

PERSECUTION
(*eagerly*)

'Twas Persecution struck the blow, I, I,
My name is Persecution, why, O, why,
Not credit me with all I do? Why pray?

NEHEMIAH
(*firmly*)

I scorn, indeed, each word thou sayest; nay,
I need not thee believe! I shall not say
Thy name.

(*Enter* UNDERSTANDING)

PERSECUTION
(*angrily*)

I go! I shall not stay,—not here!
Unless thou call'st me Persecution, Fear!
I like my name; no other one, alas,
Becometh me.

(*Brushing with disgust past* NEHEMIAH, PERSECUTION *takes* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* SELF-PITY *by the arm and leads them away.*)

Knave, traitor, let me pass!

(PERSECUTION *and* HUMAN GOODNESS *walk defiantly together to entrance. They exeunt.*)

NEHEMIAH
(to UNDERSTANDING)

When human goodness shall have passed
away,
Frail persecution shall have no more sway.

UNDERSTANDING
(to NEHEMIAH)

This is the greatest wisdom men can know,—
That persecution never struck one blow.
When this is known in churches, nations,
then
We shall have joy among the sons of men.
The summit of one's search for Truth and
good
Is knowing in Mind's loving brotherhood
There is no persecution. All is love.

NEHEMIAH

Then God is Lord of earth and heav'n above.

CANTICLE VIII.

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle VII. Morning scene. Over-bright sun typifying unrest. Enter twelve very small children. They quarrel incessantly among themselves. They constantly get in* NEHEMIAH'S *way and howl angrily over the least provocation. Collectively they represent* HUMAN BIRTH.

DISCOVERED: *Twelve noisy children trooping in, and* HUMAN GOODNESS.

HUMAN BIRTH (First Small Child)
(*stubbing toe on building material and howling bitterly*)
Oh, my, oh, my, oh, my, my toe!
(*sitting down and holding toe in hands*)
my toe!

HUMAN GOODNESS
My toe!
(*As each child speaks,* HUMAN GOODNESS

repeats the last word of each sentence like an echo.)

(*All of the children crowd noisily about the injured one. Some of them laugh mischievously. Others push and crowd and knock each other over. Some whine. Others cry for fear. Some laugh loudly. The uproar is terrific as one child pushes another and shrieks: "Leave me alone!" and another shouts: "Coward!" Suddenly someone throws bright colored baubles in the midst of the children. Together they roar hoarsely: "Good, good, good, good!" The baubles quickly vanish as the children reach out for them. Children all howl as baubles vanish.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*tenderly, to children*)

Where have I seen before such human woe?
Where have I seen such poor untempered zest
O'er life's vain baubles which but live at best
One moment?

(*as if remembering*)

Ah, I recall, in days long gone,
I, too, believed myself a child who grew
As others bade me.

HUMAN BIRTH (Second Small Child)
(*accusing all the children*)
He knew, he, he knew!

HUMAN GOODNESS
He knew!

HUMAN BIRTH (Third Small Child)
(*snatching something from another child*)
He took that!
He took that! Don't you know, I told him not to do that?

HUMAN GOODNESS
Not to do that!

HUMAN BIRTH (Fourth Small Child)
It's mine!
It's mine! You knew that was mine, now, didn't you?

HUMAN GOODNESS
Now, didn't you?

HUMAN BIRTH (Fifth Small Child)
I tell ye, it's mine! (*sobbing*)
I tell ye, it's mine! (*sobbing*). And you know it, too. You do! You do! Now, don't you?

HUMAN GOODNESS
Now, don't you?

HUMAN BIRTH (Sixth Small Child)
It's mine. I wouldn't be dishonest like you. I can prove I'm honest. Yon know you can't. Can you?

HUMAN GOODNESS

Can you?

HUMAN BIRTH (Seventh Small Child)

I had it first! You can't deny that, can you?

HUMAN GOODNESS

Can you?

HUMAN BIRTH (Eighth Small Child)

I did!

HUMAN GOODNESS

I did!

HUMAN BIRTH (Ninth Small Child)

He took it!

He took it! You know he did. Don't you?

HUMAN GOODNESS

Don't you?

HUMAN BIRTH (Tenth Small Child)

It's mine. My sister gave it to me!

HUMAN GOODNESS

Gave it to me!

HUMAN BIRTH (Eleventh Small Child)

She stole it! You saw her take it, didn't you?

HUMAN GOODNESS

Didn't you?

HUMAN BIRTH (Twelfth Small Child)

He did! Shame! Coward!

HUMAN GOODNESS

Coward!

HUMAN BIRTH (First Small Child)
(trying to protect a child)
Leave him alone, he's my brother.
He's honest and so am I. We can prove it, too. We can prove that you took that!

HUMAN GOODNESS
You took that!

HUMAN BIRTH (Second Small Child)
(Indicating child and pushing tormentor aside scornfully.)

HUMAN GOODNESS
Coward, fool, you, you!
You! You!

NEHEMIAH
The words of God may now be understood.
(beholding the quarreling of children)
I credit not mine eyes. This is not true.
(Raising hand as if stilling a tempest. The children immediately become quiet and listen. Exit HUMAN GOODNESS.)
Love knows no human birth, self's devious ways
Of fretfulness, and fear, and shouts of praise!
(Enter UNDERSTANDING. *The children's incoherent arguments gradually cease.)*

UNDERSTANDING
Thy human questionings must one day cease.
Love's government shall bring eternal peace.

NEHEMIAH

Yea, "Just unity and no questions raised"
In nation, home nor church! Let God be praised!

UNDERSTANDING

None can deny that God is Father of
All men and that He doth create through love!

NEHEMIAH

(*Compassionately to the children.*)

Dear children, how I love thee, waifs of earth,
God will reveal to thee thine own new birth!
(*as if in prophecy*)
I raise no questions with thee. God is good!
In unity all things are understood!

UNDERSTANDING

Mere human goodness is forever vain;
Its quarreling must be hushed to ever gain
True understanding which will lead men on
Past fear of self until earth's wars are won.
To-day, the tribes of Israel shall come,
Yea, twelve of them, to lead thee safely home,
Beside still waters, where man hath not age
Nor youth!

(*The children, as if in prayer, clasp their hands and look up to heaven.*)

NEHEMIAH

Come, tribes of Israel, come here!

(*Enter twelve Israelites, six men and six women. There is a hushed silence while each one takes a child gently by the hand.*)

(*approvingly, to the silent tribes*)

Unity governs wisely every one.
With no more "questions raised," God's will is done.

ALL THE CHILDREN

(*together*)

How glad we are! There is naught now to fear!

UNDERSTANDING

(*indicating the Tribes*)

They are Love's silent approbation. When
The world is free, all men shall love all men.
When approbation of all men is giv'n,
Man's home and church and marriage art in heav'n.

(*Each of the twelve children, led by a representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, passes by* NEHEMIAH. *The Cupbearer tenderly places his hand on each child as if giving a blessing.*)

NEHEMIAH

Thou shalt be safely led o'er moor and fen,

And shouldst thou stumble thou shalt rise again.

(*lovingly to children*)

These Tribes of Israel shall guard and tell
Thee how to go. Dear children, all is well!
Truth's peace be ever with thee on thy way
To Life, eternal, and effulgent day,
Where man is neither old nor young—where he
Dwells as God's image through eternity.

(*As the children and Twelve Tribes of Israel are quietly leaving the stage,* UNDERSTANDING *prays.*)

UNDERSTANDING

Thank God for silent witnesses of good!
With them, all men are truly understood.
The silent Tribes of Israel shall bless
Mankind with health and peace and happiness.
When men and nations silently agree,
The world shall know the Truth which makes it free.
And when in church all questions cease for aye
The world shall waken to eternal day.

(*Brightness of noon-day. Excessive heat, denoting weariness.*)

(*Enter* MATURITY, *a man who appears to be fast growing old. He carries a large mirror in one hand and a bottle of hair dye in the other.* MATURITY *constantly places the mirror before* NEHEMIAH *and attempts to touch up his hair.*)

MATURITY

(*fearfully to* NEHEMIAH)

I fear for thee! Thou art not well, alas!
Why shouldst thou work, my friend, thy youth will pass
From thee!
(*peering into* NEHEMIAH'S *face*)
Or, hath it gone, indeed,—
The while thou toilest over work's dead creed?
I am afraid for thee, thou troubl'st me!
This heat is very great! Alas, my friend,
I fear for thee—I do so long to send
Thee to thy rest in bed of ease, to-day,
Where thou couldst sleep earth's stupid hours away.

NEHEMIAH

(*scornfully*)

'Tis strange that thou shouldst come, when I can see
The very Truth that maketh all men free.

MATURITY

I always come—Set Ways, Gray Hair, Old Age,—
No one resists me—layman, Christian, sage!
If thou wilt never rest, then let me bring
This touch of youth to thee.
(Again tries to touch up NEHEMIAH'S *hair.)*
Thy suffering
Hath brought thee age.

NEHEMIAH
(*to* MATURITY)

I know this argument, maturity—
This cursed falsity, this cruel fear—
This baseless nothing cannot enter here.
Man is forever young, forever old,
Forever childlike—God's law hath foretold!
(*Pushes* MATURITY *beyond exit.*)
(Enter a dark, sinister-looking man with long, flowing robes. He carries a large black sack over his shoulder. His robes fly about as if blown by the wind. He is DISCOURAGEMENT.)
(*Night falls. Extremely cold and desolate.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

What, alone! Where are the lazy Jews today?

Thou workest here so long, and wherefore,
pray?
Thou hast, indeed, no portion when 'tis done.
(NEHEMIAH *drops his hammer, rubs his forehead and listens.*)
I often wonder why thou shouldst do
This useless work and slay thyself! 'Tis true
No Jew will thank thee. Come, and rest, my
friend.
A chariot awaits without. Just lend
Thy time to us a while, and thou shalt be
Repaid, indeed, for thy sincerity.
Here no one knows.
(NEHEMIAH *sadly assents.*)
Yea, no one cares!
(NEHEMIAH *agrees*)
I see
Thou art well-nigh discouraged.
(NEHEMIAH *leans dejectedly against the wall.*)
Come with me!
(NEHEMIAH *takes a few steps toward* DISCOURAGEMENT *and draws back.*)
I journey incognito and 'tis well—
I am of noble birth. Come, I will tell
Thee of thy portion, sleep; thy sacred right
To take the easy way of work. Dark night
Enfolds thee in oblivion, my friend.

(*Long arms, with flowing sleeves, held high over* NEHEMIAH'S *head.*)

Trust all to me, trust all, and I will send
Thy soul to hell (*eagerly*) and there my parent, Death,
Will rob thee of thine all,—thy very breath!
(*Takes from the sack thrown over his shoulder a handful of seeds, and scatters them about. As seeds fall, loud, harsh noises are heard.*)
This is my grain,—seeds of dismay. Why stand
Beside that wall in danger?
(*Fearful noises as seeds fall.* NEHEMIAH, *frightened, drops tools from his hands.*)
From thine hand
(*indicating tools*)
They fall! Come, let us in God's house now meet,
Within the temple. Fear would slay thee!
(*Loud reports of hail and sleet. Flashes of lightning. Stage becomes like blackest night. Evil imps, small of stature, whisk about everywhere. They tug at* NEHEMIAH'S *garments, bearing him almost to the ground, hang about his neck, whisper in his ear and mock him.*)
Sleet,

Hail, and lightning,—in the night they come.
(DISCOURAGEMENT *steps forward and takes* NEHEMIAH'S *hand as if to lead him from danger.*)
Come with me, friend, and I will lead thee home—
Straight to our safe abiding place in hell.
Come with me, and my parent, Death, will tell
Thee of thy greatness!
(NEHEMIAH *goes with him a few steps. The hail, thunder, and lightning cease and imps drop down behind heaps of building material. A lethargic peace seems to settle down.)*

NEHEMIAH
(*with a start, as if awakening*)
To—tell—of me—me?

DISCOURAGEMENT
(*quickly as if correcting his words*)
To let thee tell of all the work that thou
Hast wrought upon these walls. Come with me, now!

NEHEMIAH
(*drawing back*)
To speak of one's own self is at a loss!
God bears true witness here! Why should I cross

The barriers of hell to talk with thee
And Death about myself? I must be free!

DISCOURAGEMENT
(*still pleading*)

How still it is,—so quiet now! Ah, see,
Thou may'st have peace if thou wilt come with me.

(NEHEMIAH *draws himself up to his full height, and towers above* DISCOURAGEMENT *who appears to shrivel away almost to nothing.*)

NEHEMIAH
(*to* DISCOURAGEMENT)

I ask, should such a man as I then flee?

(*Steps with firm strides to wall and, seizing huge gates, clamps them into place.* DISCOURAGEMENT *partially rises again and begins once more to scatter seeds but the sounds are very faint and soon die away. In low, weak voice* DISCOURAGEMENT *tries to argue with* NEHEMIAH, *who continues his work.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Come—Come—*(very faint,—hail—thunder —lightning—)*
(*very low voice*) Come—come home—

Home—(*very low*)—home—home—hell—
home—
Home—home—hell—home—home.
(NEHEMIAH *rises to full height beside the nearly finished wall. One of the few last gates is clamped into place. He pays no heed to the whisperings of* DISCOURAGEMENT *but joyously continues his task.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to himself—proudly*)

'Tis nearly finished! (*sigh of relief*) Ah! I have done well,
To stand against my enemies and foes.
How well I wrought, the future ages tell,
How well I stood, the God in heaven knows!
(*As* NEHEMIAH *speaks of himself, one of the smallest and most persistent of imps perches on a pile of building material, and just as* NEHEMIAH *finishes these words, the imp tries to press a dark, green vial between his lips.*)

IMP

(*pressing vial to* NEHEMIAH'S *lips*)

Taste, taste it, friend, 'tis very, very sweet.

NEHEMIAH

(*struggling to get away*)

Why should I taste it?
(*as he speaks, the* IMP *quickly pours some of*

its contents down his throat?)

IMP

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Because 'tis truly meet
That thou shouldst know all woe.

NEHEMIAH

This (*striking vial from his mouth*) taste (*tasting*), it is —
Like cursed poison!

(*As he begins to moan,* DEATH *enters dressed in black flowing robe; he is very old and bent.*)

DEATH

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Did some one call? Is this
The place where I am wanted?

NEHEMIAH

(*to* DEATH)

No one called.
No, not wanted! (*angrily*)

DEATH

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

I heard a moan, my name,
Another name for Death; in fact, some know
No other name for Death but uttered woe!

(DEATH *steals across the stage and takes both of* NEHEMIAH'S *hands. The* IMPS *smile wickedly at* NEHEMIAH *while* DIS-

COURAGEMENT *scatters seeds of discord. Loud noises, hail, thunder. Flashes of lightning. It is still very dark.*)

Thy hands are cold, my friend, just let me hold
Them close! They are so very, very cold.

(NEHEMIAH *shudders as if overcome with cold. Enter* SIGHT, HEARING, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, *and quietly take their places at his side. They appear powerless to act.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to the five men, as he sinks down upon a pile of building material*)

I see, and smell, and taste, and touch, and hear,
And, yet, I almost yield to cursed fear.
(*calling loudly*)
Come, Wakefulness and Intuition, come,
And lead me on to Life's eternal home.
(*as if in a death struggle*)
Discernment, Faith
And Understanding, each has understood!
(*Looking appealingly toward five men.*)
All senses change forms at once to those of women. NEHEMIAH *appears relieved.*)

FAITH

(*Kneeling down and speaking clearly into*

NEHEMIAH'S *right ear, while* DEATH *continues to whine in his left ear.* NEHEMIAH'S *face undergoes a mighty change and struggle. The right side of his face, while* FAITH *is speaking, seems to be freed from pain. The left side twitches nervously as if in great pain. While* FAITH *speaks, the scene is bright and warm.*)

Thou asked for just one day of gratitude,
For vict'ry over cares, diseases, fears.
I heard thee praising God, friend, as I stood
Beside thee in thy work! A thousand years
Of blessings daily come to one who prays
Rejoicingly, and thanks God for His ways.
Thou needst not fear this monster, death, for he
Is stupid sleep, weak inactivity.
One day, a Master tenderly will say:
"Thy faith hath made thee whole. Go thou in peace."
His words are spoken now. This very day
Thou shalt have faith. Earth's tumults, then, must cease.

(FAITH *rises and steps aside*)

DEATH

(*whispering whiningly in* NEHEMIAH'S *left ear; scene changes to dark, cold night*)

How dark the night! I am unloved and old!
My happiness is past! How very cold
This place is! In the yesterdays, I had
So many joys to make me very glad.
I loved the past! This present hour, I *hate!*
I want to die! Why stay here? Wherefore
wait
For joy within the world, when joy is gone?
While others have glad days, I mourn alone!

INTUITION

(*kneeling, speaks clearly into* NEHEMIAH'S *right ear. Bright light*)

Death is the myth of myths. Human despair
And fretfulness its creed. Beset with care,
Death's other self is age, old age, that lends
Nor gives joys of to-day. Death's yesterday
now sends
It to its doom.

NEHEMIAH

(*With doubt, to* INTUITION; *looking fearfully toward* DEATH.)

Thou speak'st as if, indeed,
Death were not someone! Why say'st: "Its
creed
Is fretfulness?"
Is Death not someone, then?

INTUITION

(*Bright scene.*)

Death is a counterfeit. Time and again
It comes to speak to us, as person, when
It is not person, place, nor anything!
(DEATH *continues to whine incoherently into* NEHEMIAH'S *left ear.* NEHEMIAH *winces as if in pain.* INTUITION *rises and steps aside. The scene again becomes dark.*)

NEHEMIAH

Alas! Alas! This cruel suffering!

DEATH

(*exultingly*)

Ah me, ah me, in Babylon, my friend,
Thou didst have joy as Cupbearer. Why lend
Thy self to those who have no thought for thee?
None loves nor pities thee! None cares to see
Thee now! I know, for I am old, so old!
My name is Death, Old Age. Ah, I have told
Thee mournful facts!

NEHEMIAH

(*as if weakening*)

I know! Yea, I grow old!
My happiness is past! Friends turn away!
It was not thus, alas, in former day!

Ah, these are mournful facts which Death
hath told.

DISCERNMENT

(*speaking clearly in* NEHEMIAH'S *right ear. Light.*)

Thou shalt prove faithful, friend, patient,
and kind,
Thou shalt be grateful still to work and give!
—This is the good no man can e'er unbind,—
Thou shalt be patient that all men may live.
Thou needst not fear this monster, death.
Rise, see,
'Tis stupid sleep, weak inactivity.

DEATH

(*to* NEHEMIAH
Night scene.)

The ones who built with thee, thy very own,
Hath turned away from thee; and now, alone,
Thou facest the end of all! Is there worse
Than just to have as heritage Death's curse?
Why have they turned from thee, those shift-
less men,
To let thee die alone, unloved? Ah, when
Shall we poor mortals wake to sadly see
We have no portion save disloyalty?

NEHEMIAH

Must we poor mortals wake to sadly see
We have no portion save disloyalty?

Why do I mutter words Death speaks to me?
May I not voice the Truth that sets men free?
Why doth it seem all friends have turned
away?
Is God not God in heav'n, eternally?
This work of mine, could it have been for
naught,—
Why do I speak of self, what I have wrought?

UNDERSTANDING

(*comes quietly forward and kneels close to* NEHEMIAH *Bright scene.)*

To speak forever, friend, of God's great good
Is loving charity. Well understood
Is man's true character when God is claimed
As his Creator,—none is cursed nor blamed.
The work upon this wall is not of men,—
None shall subtract nor add to it again.
Thou needst not fear thy work shall pass
away
—And this is Life—o'er work death hath no
sway

(DEATH *binds* NEHEMIAH *with heavy, cold chains.* NEHEMIAH *groans and breathes heavily.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*shuddering*)

How cold, alas, how very, very cold

These chains are!

WAKEFULNESS

(*Light.*)

Yet they cannot ever hold
Thee from thy work. Thou shalt arise and go,
As victor over sin and fear and woe.
Death hath no power to bind the one who, freed
From self, goes forth to meet another's need.

(NEHEMIAH *continues to breathe heavily. He appears to be in a death struggle.* DEATH *exults over every groan.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*gaspingly*)

Self! Self! Self!
Self!—From self may I then go?
Pain! Self! Fear!
Death! Want! Woe!

DEATH

(*exultingly as* NEHEMIAH'S *breath becomes fainter*)

Ah, this is death! I saw it long ago,—
This closing off of breath! I know! I know!
Thou saw'st my mother breathe her last and go;
Thy father, too, ye saw it long ago.
Ah, this is death!

It is the separation which I fear.
Thou shalt be far away from here, from here.
Thy hands are cold!

(*Holds* NEHEMIAH'S *hands.*)

Yea, very cold, alas.
I fear for thee. Thou know'st that I shall pass
Death's boundaries.

NEHEMIAH

(*Rising with a struggle, gaspingly.*)

Why dost thou speak of thee
And me as ever one?

DEATH

Ah, wouldst thou see
Death's mysteries?

(*As if explainng a puzzle.*)

I would confound, confuse
Thy name with mine, so that if thou wouldst choose
Thine own, thou shalt, indeed, draw forth my name,
Fast intertwined with thine. This is Death's game
Of self,—a wicked prattle 'tis, indeed,
To speak thy name and mine together so.
Yea, Babylon confounded is my creed.
Thine heritage and mine art self and woe.

NEHEMIAH
(*shuddering*)

A tiny speck before my eye appears.
It blots out all the world! Death, all thy fears
Art come to pass!

(*Small black speck dances before* DEATH'S *and* NEHEMIAH'S *eyes. A dark and dreadful cloud, zigzag flashes of lightning. A dense, dark mist, spreading itself like a heavy cloud settles over all. Shrieks of women, screams of children, the shouts of men, some screaming, "O, let me die!"; some begging, "O, let me die!"; children crying, "O, why must I die!" Many hands lifted through the clouds of human warfare as if reaching out vainly for help.* NEHEMIAH, *with a mighty struggle, raises himself on his elbow, and beholds the death struggle of a world. The expression of his face changes quickly from intense fear to tender compassion. He reaches out both hands as if he would grasp the hands of those extended through the dark clouds and mist.* NEHEMIAH, *with wondrous strength, rises to his feet and lifts his eyes to heaven.*)

UNDERSTANDING
(to NEHEMIAH)

Self is the speck that now
Doth dance before thy sight!
I ask, canst thou

(As if speaking to ALL.)
Not see this speck wouldst shut out all the light
Of good? Father, I lift mine eyes to thee!
(speck disappears)

NEHEMIAH
(gratefully to UNDERSTANDING)
The speck of self is vanished! I am free!
I stand a freed man now! I, strong and well,
Health, joy and peace, for *all* mankind foretell!
Is all mankind involved in Death's dire woe;
Must they through endless night of fear then go?
The world, itself, is perishing, and I
Am crushed and buried in the heap! Ah, why
Should they
(with compassion)
not rise this moment, now, and be
Transformed from death to immortality?

(*in earnest prayer*)

God save mankind, this hour! Father, their need
Is more than mine! I pray, may *they* be freed!

(*as if in prophecy*)

The shepherds, keeping watch, shall see the light
Of one brave star of Love. Yea, though dark night
Of fear may settle o'er the world, they see
The star of Truth's new birth that makes men free!

(*A bright star shines clearly down through the night of darkness and dispels the gloom. The hands reaching out for help vanish in the light.*)

The star that images God's wondrous might
Of health, and holiness, and endless right.

DEATH

(*as if disheartened*)

Thou prayest for the world? Alas, in vain
I wait for thee!

NEHEMIAH

(*to* DEATH)

Thy loss becomes earth's gain!
Death's dream is false! *(triumphantly)* Another comes to say:

"Where is thy sting?" and where, grave, is thy way
Of victory?
(DEATH *sinks to the floor and falls into a dead sleep.* NEHEMIAH *laughs joyously.*)
Death takes the form of sleep.
This is the one disguise that death would keep.
(NEHEMIAH *calls messengers; two men enter.*)
Come, Messengers, and carry out this form
Of death. Disguised as sleep, death seeks to harm
All men. Self, self alone! Death's very curse
Is finite fear of self—could there be worse?
Death is nor person, place, nor anything—
Its one disguise is self and suffering.

(*The messengers carry* DEATH *from the stage.* NEHEMIAH *turns back to his work. Enter* ENEMY. *He is the counterfeit of* NEHEMIAH.)
'Tis finished, as our enemies shall see.
My God, think thou upon them, those who cursed
Our labor! Not for once, not once, I durst
Not think of them!

ENEMY

(*Waving the Union Flag,—to* NEHEMIAH.)
Come, we will talk of thee. Come, hell, come, home!
Come, let us ponder thy life's martyrdom!
I can reverse thy vict'ry over death;
I still can rob thee of thy very breath.

(*Exit the five women.* ENEMY *beckons as if to unseen allies. All of the evil messengers previously appearing in this scene hasten in, each bearing in one hand a flaming vial of boiling oil and pitch, and in the other a national emblem. Flags of all nations are displayed. The messengers war among themselves. In his effort to separate them and establish peace,* NEHEMIAH *is fairly flooded with the burning oil and tar. A beautiful woman enters slowly and seats herself at a table at right, quite aloof from the warring messengers. In one hand she holds an open Book of the Law, and in the other the Stars and Stripes. She has the appearance of a woman-child. She is satisfied, radiant, prosperous. Heaps of gold and bright colored toys are laid constantly on the table before her by pages, who quickly enter and leave.* ENEMY *seizes a*

small messenger wrapped in a tattered green flag, and stationed before NEHEMIAH, *crushes the child under foot.* ENEMY *attempts to strangle the waif with the Union Flag. The child, mockingly and vivaciously attempting to talk and moan in one breath, frequently escapes from* ENEMY'S *grasp, and limps over to the woman, only to be roughly dragged back by* ENEMY *to again obstruct* NEHEMIAH'S *vision.* NEHEMIAH *appears burdened. Unsuccessful in separating the warring messengers, he looks eagerly toward the woman for help. She sends money and scrolls of advice through her pages to* NEHEMIAH *and the messengers, but makes no effort to enter into the struggle.*)

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

We are Desire-to-be-Alone, sin's throng
Of evil messengers—we are pride's strong
Desire to think of self for good or ill.
Desire to be alone is our one will.

NEHEMIAH

(*beseechingly, to the woman*)

Why should'st thou stand aloof forever?
(NEHEMIAH *attempts to steady the wall and at the same time to read from the Book of*

the Law, while ENEMY, *flaunting the Union Flag and crushing the lame child, interferes. With back to the wall, by a supreme effort,* NEHEMIAH *keeps the structure from crashing.*)

Woman of Nations, come, and aid me now!

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

My boundaries are safe. I am at peace.
Why should I ever enter quarrels like these?
I need not fight. I need not be dismayed,
When I can stand alone and unafraid!

(*As* NEHEMIAH *beckons, one by one the messengers come to the support of the tottering wall. Each places his national ensign as a support to the crumbling structure. As this is done, the flags of many nations are hidden from view.* DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE *wraps her Stars and Stripes closely about her, and refuses to move.*)

Earth's tumult wearies me. I love to rest
Secure in my own peace, yea, this is best!
God has been good to give me this safe place,
So far away from sin and war. His grace
Hath well protected *me!*

NEHEMIAH

(*to* DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE)

To think of one's own self is at a loss.
God's secret place is here! I bear no cross.

I know thee, troops of persons, nations, things—
Thou art desire-to-be-alone, which brings
These barriers of hell to me and thee.
Though multitudes are with me, I am free!

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

Why should I go? I rest here so secure!
Though every nation fall, I shall endure.
My gold is plentiful. I have great gain.
I am protected, too, from war and pain!

NEHEMIAH

(To the woman)

Desire to share, desire to do and give,
Desire to lend thyself that men may live,—
This, then, is joyous rest,—home, heaven, all.
Desire to be with men, to heed the call
Of all mankind,—yea, each desire to be
With others brings life, immortality.
Woman, thine isolation thou shalt give
That all the nations of the world may live.

(The woman plays with her toys.)

Thou shalt yet leave thy nursery and come
Out among men and make the world thine home.
Thou shalt retain thy childlike joy and ways
And thus redeem all nations. God be praised!

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

The troubles of this world are not for me,
I shall remain alone, protected, free!

NEHEMIAH

(*looking longingly toward the woman*)

Desire to be alone is worse than death,—
It robs mankind of all. One's very breath
Is giving and receiving. God is good,
And in His law, all things are understood
When men and nations speak of God each hour
And long to be with others. Yea, the pow'r
Of Truth is mighty as we know each one
Who speaks proclaims the Father's will is done.

(*One by one as the messengers come to the support of the wall and surrender a national emblem,* NEHEMIAH *bows his head in prayer.*)

Father, I thank Thee, thank Thee, I thank Thee.
I thank Thee, Father, to be with Thee and Thine
Own children, Thine own nations, Thine and mine!
Father, I thank Thee.

(NEHEMIAH *turns away as if seeking no longer the woman's aid. He has not ob-*

served ENEMY'S *cruel treatment of the lame child. The wall is about to crash. Each messenger now, with back to the wall, is aiding in the support. The woman reads calmly on and counts her gold.)*

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

I love to be alone. This is my gain,—
To stand aloof from war and want and pain.

(*As* NEHEMIAH *speaks, darkness enfolds the woman. She still endeavors to read.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*as if in prophecy*)

Friends, a nation's need
One day shall be to dwell with others. Freed
From lonely sepulchre, her men shall rise
Leagued with a world, united. Paradise
Is gained through guarding all earth's brotherhoood.
This nation shall surrender naught of good.
She having sought a quiet place of rest,
Shall find her peace, all that is true and best,
In dwelling with the nations of the earth,—
A world shall waken, then, to Love's new birth.

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

God surely favored me when I was born
So far remote from war and sin and harm!

(Darkness as of the sepulchre enfolds the woman. The wall is about to crash.)

NEHEMIAH

Who dwells in peace with others shall not find
Within the tomb a lonely dwelling place.
Each one shall see his Maker face to face.

(NEHEMIAH *has turned away as if he had completely forgotten the woman. For the first time, he beholds* ENEMY'S *inhumane treatment of the lame child.* NEHEMIAH *snatches the Union Flag from* ENEMY'S *grasp and hides the emblem behind the wall. The child, still lame, but freed, hobbles laughingly to the woman. Stone after stone crashes unnoticed upon* NEHEMIAH'S *head.)*

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

I see it all. I loved God well but men
I have not loved! I shall awaken when
My love for men is born,—the sons of earth.
(clasping the lame child in her arms)
I shall awaken then to Love's new birth.
This joyous child shall talk and laugh and sing;

And weep no more,—then shall earth's suffering
Forever cease. This child knows government
As well as others since God's word is sent
To rule.

NEHEMIAH
(As ENEMY *exits)*

This enemy of mine shall no more claim
That he must govern all the earth.

(Tenderly to the child)

No name
Like thine, dear child, the world shall ever know.
Thou hast awakened men from self and woe.
Nations and men awaken now to find
There is one government, the law of Mind.

(The woman, thrusting all of her gold within the Stars and Stripes, and holding by the hand the child, now walking straight, hastens to the fast crumbling wall. The child, affectionately embracing each messenger in passing, goes to NEHEMIAH *and lovingly takes his hand. The child joyously tosses his green flag over the wall. As the woman hurls past the wall the huge*

bundle of gold wrapped in the Stars and Stripes, the structure straightens but does not stand secure. The child, transformed, now strong and agile, expresses much joy while he dances vivaciously about. The woman, holding aloft the Book of the Law, enters in the dance with the child while they together pray the words of the Lord's prayer. NEHEMIAH *and the messengers look up suddenly as if startled. With* NEHEMIAH *leading, all messengers holding their positions before the wall, join in the prayer of the woman and child, and as they pray, they dance. The wall stands almost if not quite secure. The woman, laughing joyously, stands at the right of the wall.* NEHEMIAH *and the messengers are at first startled at her joy, but, after a moment, they all join in her happiness. The woman at one end reads in the bright light the Book of the Law and, as she does so, the wall stands straight and true. The messengers, representing the nations of the world, stand at her left.* NEHEMIAH *at the extreme left with the Book of the Law in one hand, and with the other raised in grateful benediction, prays. In the bright*

light it is seen that the woman is UNDERSTANDING.)

This work is wrought of God. Yea, He, alone,
Hath surely built this wall, stone upon stone.
(*to the woman*)
Thou art Desire-to-be-with-Others. See!
(*Pointing triumphantly to the messengers, who rest easily beside the fortified wall.*)
Woman, thine hand hath set the whole world free!
'Tis plain why I alone have failed to save,
I have been weary, burdened, far too grave.
The world has need of childlike joy and rest,
And true responsibility. 'Tis best
That we should always build together now.
While I must learn of thee, blest woman, thou
May learn of me to love the sons of earth;
Thus shall we each rejoice in Truth's new birth.
Thou art the Understanding men have sought
So long, the childlike joy, not one has bought
Save with the price of giving all. Blest one,
Woman of Nations, God's will now is done!

UNDERSTANDING

From this time forth, my words are spoken last.
Whene'er I speak, the woes of earth are past.
My work is to be glad! This is Truth's way
Of doing all.
(*with hands extended joyously, the woman laughs as she prays*)
Rejoicingly we pray!

CANTICLE IX

SABBATH REST, FOLLOWED BY EVIL'S ACCUSATIONS

DESCRIPTION: *Showing completed walls. The bright light of a Sabbath morning shines over all.*

DISCOVERED: *A vast company of men, women, and children, singing praises for the completion of the walls.*

ALL

(*singing together*)

"O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.
O give thanks unto the God of gods; for His mercy endureth forever.
O give thanks to the Lord of lords; for His mercy endureth forever.
To Him who alone doeth great wonders; for His mercy endureth forever."

(Ps. 136:1-4.)

(*Enter* NEHEMIAH *with* HANANI
and HANANIAH)

NEHEMIAH

(*to* HANANI *and* HANANIAH)

I give thee charge over Jerusalem,—
The while I depart to my lord, the King.
Let thy singers sing a glad anthem;
Everyone faithful let him praise and sing:
Glory to God on High!

HANANI

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

I take thy charge.

NEHEMIAH

(*to* HANANIAH)

"Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened
until the sun be hot;
And while they stand by,
Let them shut the doors, and bar them:
And appoint watches of the inhabitants of
Jerusalem
Every one in his watch,
And every one to be over against his house."
Thou art a captain, commanded to keep
Watch over Israel; faint not nor sleep.
(Nehemiah 7:3.)

NEHEMIAH

(*to* EZRA, *the Scribe*)

Bring the Book of the Law of Moses

Which the Lord hath commanded to Israel.
Bring the Book. Let its pages tell
The words of the Law, which the Lord, our God
Hath commanded to Israel.

(EZRA, *the priest, brings the Book of the Law before the men and women; and reads therein before the water gate. He stands upon a pulpit of wood. Beside him stand several men.*)

EZRA

(*reading from parchment Bible*)

"Thou, even thou, art Lord alone;
Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens,
With all their host, the earth, and all the things that are therein,
The seas, and all that is therein,
And thou preserveth them all;
And the host of heaven worshippeth thee.
Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram,
And broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees,
And gavest him the name of Abraham;
And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,
And heardest their cry by the Red sea;

And shewedst signs and wonders upon
Pharaoh,
And on all his servants, and on all the people
of his land: for thou knewest
That they dealt proudly against them.
And Thou did'st divide the sea before them,
so
That they went through the midst of the sea
on the dry land."

(Nehemiah 9:6, 7, 9, 10, 11.)

(*The people weep as the Law is read.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to* ALL)

This day is holy unto the Lord your God;
Mourn not, nor weep.
Mourn not, nor weep.
Go your way (*to the people who still weep*),
eat the fat, and drink the sweet,
And send portions unto them for whom
nothing is prepared:
For this day is holy unto our Lord:
Neither be ye sorry;
For the joy of the Lord is your strength.

THE LEVITES

(*on either side of* EZRA)

"Hold your peace for the day is holy;
Neither be ye grieved."

(*The people who have prostrated themselves*

rise with olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palms, and branches of thick trees, and sing together.)

ALL

(*singing together*)

This day is a day of gladness,
For we have comprehended
The words of the law which were read to us.
O Lord, Thy name we bless.

(*exeunt singers*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to* HANANI)

I appoint thee keeper of this wall,
And all Jerusalem. Pray,
Let not vain pride, nor power nor human sway
Cause one stone e'er to fall.

(*to* ELIASHIB, *a relative of* TOBIAH, *pointing to temple*)

Watch o'er yon temple wisely. Israel
Shall be redeemed. God keep thee! All is well!
To-day I return to my lord, the King
Of Babylon. Indeed, I go to bring
Him homage, gratitude, and loyalty.

ALL

May peace and joy and health, be e'er with thee!

(*As the last words are spoken in farewell, enter two messengers from* ARTAXERXES, *the King. All exeunt save* NEHEMIAH.)

FIRST MESSENGER

(*hastily to* NEHEMIAH)

A letter to thee, sir, thy lord, the King,
Commissioned me to come, quickly to bring
This message.

NEHEMIAH

(*Taking letter, reads it as if not understanding its contents. He continues to read, as if puzzled.*)

I was going there—to-day—
To Persia—I seek to be a king? (*reading*)
May
I be punished if 'tis true,—I seek,—I
(*reading*) To be a king? (*puzzled*) Of what and wherefore? Why
Should I be king when there is One, alone,—
The God in heaven? (*reading*) "And thou must well atone
For all thy vanity. I trusted thee
And now thou, traitor-like (*reading*), would'st pillage me
Of mine own kingdom. Thou must surely be

An ingrate, so Sanballat says, and he
Hath proof whereof he speaks. I know no way
Save punishment to curb thy wicked sway."

SECOND MESSENGER

(*while* FIRST MESSENGER *steps to* NEHEMIAH'S *side and both bind him with chains*)

We take thee prisoner.

NEHEMIAH

(*to* MESSENGERS)

I was to come
Of myself as King's Cupbearer. (*pondering*)
My home
Is not an earthly kingdom. God is good,
And He, indeed, hath surely understood.
This work upon the walls, canst thou not see
(*pointing with chained hand to wall*)
Was truly mine own kingdom! Just to free
Another from the curse of poverty
And sin and fear, my friends, is all I ask
Of earthly kingdom,—just my daily task.
(*as if explaining a vision*)
I seek to be a king? If this should be,
The friendship of the world is not for me.
Who longs for understanding, now may gain
The friendship of the world in Love's true name.

(Enter UNDERSTANDING.*)*

UNDERSTANDING
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

In years to come, a jealous world shall aim
To drag a nation down to hell and shame,
Brave nation, suff'ring, till her crown is cast
Aside for work,—then creeds and caste shall last
No more in churches, nations, business,—then
We shall have peace among the sons of men.
And when she no more governs, then mankind
Is governed by the healing word of good,—
That day, Mind's law shall heal earth's brotherhood.
In years to come, this nation's love shall hold
Rightly its royal kingship till the gold
Of character is chastened,—well refined—
A kingdom shall retain her king, till Mind
Shall reign supreme o'er all; then worlds shall prove
The King of all the heav'n, and earth, is Love!

(*Exit* NEHEMIAH *bound with chains between the two messengers.*)

CANTICLE X

DESCRIPTION: *A vast underground rock quarry. Blinding smoke from the blasting. Desolate, weird surroundings.*

DISCOVERED: *Several slaves and overseer silently at work crushing stones. They each groan under the desperate burden of the work.* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *stand at one side and watch the workers with sinister glee.*

TIME: *Several years later.*

(*Enter* NEHEMIAH. *He is carrying heavy blasting materials. He lays down his burden and begins hewing out the largest of the rocks. As he works, just above him* UNDERSTANDING *holds aloft the Declaration of Independence and drops this precious manuscript, page by page, into the fire below.* NEHEMIAH *smiles gratefully at* UNDERSTANDING *and, taking from his bosom a crown of gold, heightened*

with four crosses, he drops it thoughtfully in the flames below. Again NEHEMIAH *glimpses the completed Temple and wall of Jerusalem. A wondrous city lies beyond. His work upon the stones is easily accomplished. Finally, a vision of the Statue of Liberty appears at the entrance to earth's Promised Land. For a brief moment,* NEHEMIAH *extends both hands as if in joyous greeting to the womanly traits of love and tenderness, typified in this statue, which must eventually spiritualize the universe; and as he reaches out his hands, the very stones about him fall of themselves to pieces as if made ready for use without human effort. All about* NEHEMIAH, *the other slaves who behold no vision, are moaning bitterly over their tasks.* SANBALLAT, GESHEM, *and* TOBIAH *discern* NEHEMIAH'S *joy and work. Together they plan to further punish* NEHEMIAH. *During this scene, no word is spoken.*)

CANTICLE XI

"THERE IS NOTHING COVERED, THAT SHALL NOT BE REVEALED;"
(Matthew 10:26.)

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle I. The Persian Court.*

DISCOVERED: KING ARTAXERXES *and* QUEEN *on throne. Royal festivities. A strange Cupbearer is serving wine.*

TIME: *Nine years later than Canticle VIII.*

THE KING
(*to* MESSENGER)

And so Sanballat comes to us to-day?

MESSENGER
(*to* KING)

Blest King, Sanballat comes, and Geshem, too.

THE KING
(*observing the new Cupbearer as he goes about his task serving wine—to* MESSENGER)

Tell me, how is my Cupbearer of time long past?

MESSENGER
(*to* KING)

Nehemiah?

KING AND QUEEN
(*eagerly, together*)

Nehemiah.

MESSENGER

'Tis true to watch and pray
And work, is all he ever seeks to do.

THE KING

Some one has said his peace and joy e'er last.

MESSENGER

'Tis very true; the hardest, roughest task
Is not too much, indeed, for him to ask
To do.

THE KING

Where is he working now, my son?

MESSENGER
(*to* KING)

He toils within thy quarries, till the sun
Sinks low. Thou dost, blest King of Persia, know
That he was doomed with convict-slaves to give
His days to crushing stones, that he might live,

Or merely might exist through days of woe,—
This was his punishment, my Lord and King.
Because Sanballat said he sought to bring
Himself to higher power,—to rule, perchance,
Within Jerusalem.

THE KING
(*pondering*)
He has had chance
To murmur *(thinking deeply)*. Yea, I know
that he was sent
To toil on yonder pile of stones, till bent
And old he should become.
(*As if arousing to new interest.*)
Does he complain?

MESSENGER
Not at his work! He holds as richest gain
A task that takes all courage. There are
days
When those who watch him toil, say that he
prays
Unceasingly.

THE KING
What is his prayer?

MESSENGER
That fortified Jerusalem may stand.

THE KING
Would he return?

MESSENGER

Of this he does not pray. He ofttimes says
With deepest love, that God in His own ways
Must keep Jerusalem—shall guard it well—
That God is King, alone.

THE KING

And does he tell
Of his own wondrous work upon the wall?

MESSENGER

Not once. He always prays no stone may fall.

(*Enter* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *with several attendants. They all kneel before the* KING *and* QUEEN. *The* KING *gives them (permission to arise.)*

THE KING

(*to* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM)

Governors, thy wishes?

SANBALLAT

We came to say
The punishment thou gav'st still does not stay
His joy.

THE KING

What meanest thou? Speak on.

SANBALLAT

Nine years ago, we came and told thee, King,
Of one knave, Nehemiah. We would bring

Thee safety, King, again to-day. Ye gave
A punishment to him, nine years ago,
Because he sought to make himself a knave
In trying to be king. I told thee this,
I come once more to tell thee, thou shouldst know
He truly seems to love the task that thou
Hast given him for punishment, and now
It would seem wise to change his work again,
And give him duties that would cause him pain.

THE KING
(*incredulously*)

Thou sayest he loves his toil as felon slave?

GESHEM
(*to* KING)

He truly does! Ha, ha, (*scornfully*) he is a knave.

THE KING
(*thoughtfully*)

What shall I give him, then, to do that he
May still be punished for disloyalty?

SANBALLAT
(*wickedly*)

It may seem strange, indeed, to thee, blest King,
But I have thought it would be suffering

For him, if thou wouldst bring him unto thee,
Within thy court, and offer fealty
And homage to him, give him ease and gain.
I know him well! (*chuckling*) I'm sure, to him, 'twere pain
To idle festive hours away in ease.
I surely know, he would not relish these
Gay, feasting days of Court life. Ah, I know
To him it would be misery and woe.

THE KING
(*doubtfully*)

To him it would be misery and woe?

SANBALLAT
(*with decision*)

To him, it would be misery and woe.

THE KING
(*to* COURT MESSENGERS)

Bring Nehemiah, and each convict slave
Who toils on yonder pile. It is the hour
Of day when each is coming from his work.

GESHEM
(*delightedly*)

Ah, we shall see again that fool and knave
Who loves his labor. King, increase thy power,
And give him work that he will loathe and shirk,—

Give Nehemiah work that he will hate!

SANBALLAT

(*to* KING)

'Twould be just punishment. Why longer wait?

(*Enter* MESSENGERS *and several galley slaves, including the overseer of the squad of toilers.*)

MESSENGER

(*to* KING)

Thy subjects, King of Persia, now are here.

(*pointing to slaves*)

OVERSEER

(*explaining to* KING)

Save Nehemiah; he had work o'er there,
Upon yon pile of stones. He ever stays
Long past the hours of all his working days.
I say, "Enough's enough!" We toil all day,
Yea, thirteen hours,—more than this time, I say
We cannot serve! The hours are very long,
Except for him who always works with song
Upon his lips. For him, the day is ever very brief;
But for the rest of us,

(*with wave of hand he indicates the slaves about him*)

O King, our grief

Is very great!

THE KING

(*addressing the other slaves*)

My men, and what say'st thou?

MEN

(*almost moaning*)

King, for the rest of us, our misery
Is very great.

SANBALLAT

(*eagerly*)

I told thee so, my King!
This Nehemiah should have suffering,
Deep suffering, and pain, and want, and woe!

GESHEM

(*to* KING)

This man who sought to be a King should know
The pangs of hell. His work should day by day
Be weary burden wearing life away.

THE KING

(*to* MESSENGER)

Bring Nehemiah, tell him I send word
For him to come at once,—let this be heard.

(*exit* MESSENGER *hastily*)

(*to* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *with tone indicating doubt*)

I took thy oaths, my Governors, the day

I sent him to yon stone pile. Now the way
Grows complicated. What am I to do
To punish him? It may, indeed, be true
He hath not yet atoned; and, yet, I trust,
We have judged righteous judgment. Ah, we must
Ask Nehemiah's God this time to tell
Just what is right to do,—that which is well.

(*The* KING *bows his head a moment, as if in prayer. The* QUEEN, *also, bows her head reverently.* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *shift from one foot to another, clear their throats, and appear annoyed.*)

SANBALLAT

(*anxiously interrupting, to* KING)

The question is a simple one. I know
An easy life at Court would bring him woe.

(*enter* NEHEMIAH)

NEHEMIAH

(*he has grown older, yet more radiant; he is dressed as a rough workman*)

(*joyously*)

King, hast thou sent for me to come, I pray?

THE KING

(*Appears deeply moved. The* QUEEN *looks at* NEHEMIAH *with the tender expression of a mother.*)

Yea, Prince, (*pauses as if embarrassed*) I

sent for thee—(*hesitatingly*) for thee—
to say
That thou shalt live in ease within my sight,
As royal Cupbearer. Thou may'st begin
To choose thine own attendants. Bring the
ring
And royal robe (*to attendant*).
(*Attendant brings at once a costly satin robe of many colors and places the garment tenderly in* NEHEMIAH'S *hands.* NEHEMIAH *drops the robe quickly to the ground and covers his face with his hands as if grieved.*)
Thou shalt have riches, honor, power, might.
(NEHEMIAH *picks the robe up from the floor as if fulfilling a duty. He shudders as his rough hands touch the soft satin.*)
Why speakest thou not to me? Hast thou
naught
To say, thou menial slave, with ransom
bought
And paid for by thy King? Wouldst thou
not come
And serve as Cupbearer within my home
And court?

NEHEMIAH

(*to* KING *while he looks longingly toward*

the OVERSEER)

King, there is much to do, as he (*indicating* OVERSEER) can tell.
I should not leave my work. 'Twould not be well
With thee (*to* OVERSEER) and all thy men.
(*turning to slaves*)

(NEHEMIAH, *still holding the costly robe, stands among the toilers. Unthinkingly, he begins stroking the soft satin garment. His hands, rough with toil, catch harshly on the soft satin. He shudders. To* KING.)

Blest King, my very hands are hardened now
To toil,—to roughest work. Why should I cease
My labors? There are those to serve, I vow,
Much fitter, in this Court. Pray, call on these,
And let me go. Blest King, (*pleadingly*) they're needing me,
These men (*indicating slaves*) are not so strong as I.
Ah, see
My brawny arms! (*bares his muscular arms*)

THE OVERSEER
(*to* KING)

My King, one word,

When he (*indicating* NEHEMIAH) first came
to me, I, too, had heard
How he had sought to be a king o'er there,
Within Jerusalem. I took great care
To make his punishment full hard, O King.
I heaped upon him curses! Suffering
Became his daily portion! Yea, I know
He had full measure in his meed of woe.
I hated him! And why?—I cannot tell,—
I longed to see him suffer pangs of hell.

QUEEN AND KING
(*eagerly, as if suffering*)

And did he suffer?

OVERSEER

At first, there were days
When all his stones seemed mountains.
Bitter ways,
My King, belong unto the felon-slave.
Well doth he pay for all the hours he gave
To sin.

THE KING
(*to* OVERSEER)

And this man (*indicating* NEHEMIAH), did
he murmur much?

OVERSEER
(*to* KING)

Ah, no, my King, I never have seen such
As he! With every stone he toiled to break,

It fairly seemed, he did arise, awake,
To higher things! My King, I cannot lend
Him even unto thee—he is our friend!

(*the* OVERSEER *and slaves crowd lovingly about* NEHEMIAH)

(*Startled*) Ah, what have I said? Shall I be punished more?
I told the truth but did not think before
I spoke!

KING

(*to all—with firmness*)

But I have spoken, and my word
Is first and last our law,—it must be heard!

SANBALLAT)

(*laughing wickedly,—to* GESHEM)

His (*indicating Nehemiah*) happy days, I know, are truly past,
We have accomplished all we wish at last!

KING

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Speak up, and tell me—what hast thou to say
About thy work?

NEHEMIAH

(*to* KING)

My King, just now, the way
Is very bright for me, upon yon pile

Of stones; if I might work there for a while
(*pleadingly*)
I know that I might help these men (*indicating slaves*). I stand
Ready to serve, my King (*pleadingly*). We have had good
Days yonder! (*As if pointing to stone pile.*)
If one only understood! (*earnestly*)
(*Regretfully*) If I should—come—(*slowly*)
—to thee— I know—that—I—
Can do no more than come, alas, and try
To serve thee well. (*As if convincing himself of a duty. Enter* UNDERSTANDING. *She smiles approvingly.*)

KING
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Hast thou forgotten, pray
Doth memory recall that long past day
Thou wrought upon the towering walls that stand
About Jerusalem?

NEHEMIAH
(*joyously*)

Ah, King, my hand
Still builds those walls.

KING
(*startled*)
Thy hand still builds those walls?

NEHEMIAH
(*to* KING)
Ah, yes, blest King, and not a stone e'er falls.
Each rock I crush o'er there, it is, indeed,
For these redeemed captives. Yea, their need
Is yet my prayer, O King.

KING
(*eagerly*)
And wouldst thou go
To view those walls again? Speak, let me know!
(*Leans forward eagerly.* NEHEMIAH *kneels at feet of* KING.)

SANBALLAT AND GESHEM
(*afraid*)
King, why speakest thou so? Art thou, then, mad?
This is his wish to go,—his prayer, ah, had—
We our own way—

KING
(*interrupting, firmly*)
Hold, fools! I listened once
To all thou hadst to say. I, too, was dunce

And knave, indeed, to heed thy foolish lies!
This man, (*bending forward, as he tenderly places his hand on* NEHEMIAH'S *bowed head*) is Prince, indeed; yea, he may rise
And go again to view those walls. His creed
Of kingship is to meet each human need
With love. He truly was a king o'er there,
E'en at Jerusalem, and monarch where
Those felon-slaves were toiling day by day.
To be a king is just to watch and pray!
I see it now, yea, all is very plain;
He seeks no earthly kingship. No, nor gain
Is there for him in title when he knows
The joy of daily work where'er he goes.
(*Summons messengers and whispers directions. They chain* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *together.*)
(*To* SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM)
Go forth from me! Thy faces nevermore
Shall look on mine! Go forth, the open door
Of Hades waits for every cursed lie
That would besmirch true manhood. They shall die,—
These falsehoods, every one, but man is free,
Born of one true Creator, God, is he!
Such is the teaching of his ministry.
(*indicating* NEHEMIAH, *to* SANDBALLAT *and*

GESHEM)

Thou shalt be punished. All that thou hast said,
Each idle word thou uttered stand'st as curse
Of wrong before thee. Yea, thou shalt be fed
By jealousy. Ah, could'st thou suffer worse?

(SANBALLAT *and* GESHEM *with heads bowed in shame depart. They are bound between two messengers.*)

(*To* NEHEMIAH, *waving him permission to arise.*)

To-morrow, thou and I, and all these men,
(*indicating slaves*)
With our blest Queen, and Court, shall go again
To see Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH

(*to* KING)
(*gratefully*)

Blest King, our gain
Shall be to find those walls still strongly stand,—
This is our kingdom, Sire.

KING

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

I pledge my hand
That I regret those long and bitter days

That thou hast toiled on pile of stones. The ways
Of blind revenge are hard, indeed, to bear. (*Weeps.*)

NEHEMIAH

My King, I pray thee, do not have a care
For those days; they were sweet, indeed, to me,—
Those blessed hours I knew that I might be
A friend to all I wrought with. Even, then,
As slaves condemned, we still were friends and—men.
Jerusalem! (*Extending his arms as if to an invisible City, while* UNDERSTANDING *smiles radiantly.)* I see thy walls again,
Rising about me. Father, (*eyes raised to heaven*) I am blest
With all thine hand hath given me! I pray
To thank Thee ever on my homeward way.
Jerusalem, I saw thy walls arise
Above yon pile of stones! King, my surprise
Was very great when I, awake, didst see
The heavenly city come to set me free
From all my weary toil and suffering!
Ah, thou shalt see Jerusalem, my King!
The new Jerusalem, with walls built high,—
High unto heaven that he who passeth by

May see the remnant now is safe, indeed,
Within the city, coming down from heaven,
The city, founded peaceably, and given
To Love and Life and joy and work; yea, these
Are its foundation stones.

UNDERSTANDING

The God of peace
Hath built Jerusalem! And, over all,
The Father watcheth tenderly! The wall
Of His protecting love stands strong and true
About the remnant! Israel's captive Jew
Hath been redeemed! He is not bond, nor free,
Nor male, nor female, Jew, nor Greek is he!
Messiah's hope shall free! The world shall see
(*to all, as if prophesying*)
Jerusalem! Father, thanks be to Thee.

CANTICLE XII.

CASTING PERSONAL OWNERSHIP, HUMAN GOODNESS AND HUMAN POWER OUT OF THE TEMPLE. SALVATION.

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle VIII.*
DISCOVERED: *All the people gathered before the walls at mid-day.*
TIME: *Ten days later.*

ALL
(*intoning*)

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Or who shall stand in His holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
Nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is the King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory." (Psalm 24.)

EZRA

(*Reading, before the people, from Isaiah* 52:1.)

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

(*Closes the book, and turning, looks intently at the temple. All the people look toward the temple.* ELIASHIB *is seen running up and down the steps of the temple carrying armsful of* TOBIAH'S *personal belongings, such as robes, caps, shoes, etc. Some of these belongings he occasionally drops,*

and they are carelessly strewn about the temple steps.)

(*Turning about and addressing the people.*)

Our friend, Cupbearer of the King, returns to-day.

ALL

(*shouting gladly*)

Ah ha, he comes—he comes—the way
Of peace is Nehemiah's.

(ELIASHIB *is busied in the door of the temple with his own personal work.*)

EZRA

(*disapprovingly to* ELIASHIB)

A good word
Hast thou to say to him?

ELIASHIB

(*carelessly to* EZRA)

Yea, I have wrought
Within this temple, just as he has taught.

EZRA

(*to* ELIASHIB)

For thyself, alone, hast wrought?

ELIASHIB

(*to* EZRA)

At times, 'tis true.
All work may not be given for Greek and Jew.

(HANANI *and* HANANIAH *are sleeping soundly at one end of the porch of the temple.* SLEEP, *in dull colors, is watching jealously over them.*)

EZRA

(*pointing derisively toward the sleepers*)
Yet they were truly left in charge! Yon temple wall
They have not guarded. Even though it fall,
Would they awake? (*The sleepers, breathing heavily, move, in their sleep, over very near to the edge of the porch.*) Ah, lethargy, I know
Of none more deadly enemy and foe! (*pointing toward sleepers*)
Nor home, nor church thou guardest when with sleep
Thine eyes are heavy. A still small voice will come,
And sadly say: "Couldst thou not watch one hour,
And keep a loving guard o'er church and home?"

(*A loud blare of trumpets is heard without. Enter chariots and drivers, Court attendants,* KING ARTAXERXES *and* QUEEN, *former slaves dressed as nobles.* NEHEMIAH

enters last, accompanied by the five beautiful women, WAKEFULNESS, INTUITION, DISCERNMENT, FAITH *and* UNDERSTANDING.

NEHEMIAH
(*to All*)

Greeting, my friends. (*All bow reverently.*)
The walls (*examining walls carefully*) still stand, I see.
I thank thee for thy true fidelity! (*Again bows to all.*)
(*At this moment,* ELIASHIB *and* TOBIAH *emerge from the temple, carrying softest of down pillows, images, robes, and many personal belongings.* NEHEMIAH *discerns this proceeding, and bounding joyously up the steps of the temple, lovingly greets* ELIASHIB.)

So thou (*tenderly*)
Hast prepared for God a great chamber,
Where aforetime our fathers laid their meat offerings,
The frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn,
The new wine and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters;

And the offerings of the priests?

THE KING
(to NEHEMIAH)

I, Artaxerxes, king of Babylon,
Bear witness, in all this time,
Thou wert not at Jerusalem.

QUEEN *and* COURT
(together)

We bear witness, Nehemiah, King's Cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH
(*to Court*)

Worthy King and Queen and Court of Artaxerxes Longimanus,
Thou bearest witness, in all this time,
I was not at Jerusalem.

THE KING

This cursed ownership is not thy shame;
Thou art exonerated, free from blame!

NEHEMIAH
(to KING)

I thank thee for this judgment, still I call
Upon thee for a higher sentence. All
I ask is, let me share their blame. I know
Sin's devious ways through finite church, and though
They have built for themselves, 'tis true that

they *(indicating* ELIASHIB *and* TOBIAH)
Are eager now to watch and work and pray.
To leave them with a pow'r they could not prove
In one brief moment, truly was not love.
I should have stood with them. In Church, I know
Are devious ways of self and pride and woe.
Even the quarries there at Babylon
Should not have held me. Truly, we are one
In blame and Love's forgiveness. We are freed
Together, they and I, to meet earth's need.

KING, QUEEN *and* COURT
(together)

This is our judgment. They and thou art freed
And all the world to meet mankind's great need.

NEHEMIAH
(to KING, QUEEN *and* COURT)

I do thank thee for this just decision,
Thou King and Queen and Court of Babylon.
In years to come, I can behold a day
When no one proves another wrong. The sway
Of human creeds will then have passed away.

There shall be no divisions then, that hour,
Of just and unjust. God's unerring pow'r
Shall rule all men.
To-day Truth's temple cannot be profaned;
None enter there as thieves in Mind's clear sight.
(TOBIAH, *hearing the conversation without, comes to the door of the temple, and yawns as if awakened from a long sleep.*)
For himself none has wrought, not one has gained,
For God is the Lord of right.

EZRA

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Stay

(*pointing derisively to* TOBIAH)

His cursed selfishness.

NEHEMIAH

I raise no questions with him. God is good.
In Church all men are truly understood.
(*pointing lovingly to* ELIASHIB *and* TOBIAH)
For himself no one has wrought, no one gained,
For God is the Lord of right.
(ELIASHIB *and* TOBIAH *re-enter the temple and returning again to the door, cast out, far beyond the wall, their household stuff.*

Both men take their places with the group of workers. Servants come with water for cleansing. During this process, the singers flee from the stage, every one returning to his own field.)

EZRA

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

I perceive that the portions of the Levites
Have not been given them. (*Looking about where the singers stood.*)
For the Levites and the singers that did the work
Are fled every one to his field.
(*Addressing the rulers, and pointing toward the empty temple.*)
Why is the house of God forsaken?

NEHEMIAH

(*Bows his head in prayer.*)
The house of God can never be forsaken.
(*to rulers*)
And Labor's portion never can be lost.
No one can own this sacred place. (TOBIAH *and* ELIASHIB *nod assent.*)
Naught e'er can drive a worker out
Of Church. There is no fear, no doubt,
Nor death, nor ownership, nor creed,
That e'er can keep a worker from his meed.

No one can own outright goodness and grace,
Each worker must forever fill his place,
And earn the loving wage of giving all.
(ELIASHIB *and* TOBIAH *drop their personal belongings.)*

RULERS
(repeating with emphasis)
Each now pays the price
Of giving all!

EZRA
(to NEHEMIAH)
(*Observing* HANANI *and* HANANIAH, *sleeping, while* SLEEP *watchfully guards them.*)
Why is mankind so loath to keep awake?
Is God not good to think of? Why, then, sleep
Away one's precious hours? Arise, and shake
This cursed lethargy aside.
(goes to edge of porch and gives men vigorous shaking)
(*Both men wake. Exit* SLEEP *very quietly.*)

NEHEMIAH
(to all)
Men keep the faith today and bless, indeed,
The earth since wakefulness is their one creed.
(*As* NEHEMIAH *speaks,* HUMAN GOODNESS,

wearing a long silken wrap and costly furs, appears in the door of the temple. PERSECUTION *stands close beside her.* CREEDS OF MEN, *in ecclesiastical garb, endeavors to enter.* HUMAN GOODNESS *refuses to let him pass into the temple.* PERSECUTION *holds a handkerchief to the eyes of* HUMAN GOODNESS *as she weeps.)*

HUMAN GOODNESS

(*Weeping while* PERSECUTION *wipes her eyes.*)

Church is my place of refuge. There I weep
And hide, e'en after lethargy and sleep
And ownership all have been cast aside.
In church I weep and whisper, sneer and hide!
I weep for all the sins of everyone
Except myself. I do not sin! I've won
Through ages, fulsome praise of human good,
And yet, I'm neither loved nor understood.

EZRA

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Call all Judah, (*gladly*) let them bring
The tithe of corn and new wine,
And oil to fill our empty treasuries;
Let them gather the fruit from the field and vine,
That our God in heaven we please!

(NEHEMIAH *appears contented, as if he were refusing to assume false responsibility.*)

NEHEMIAH

The voice of All in Church redeems the earth.
The voice of All speaks with Love's mighty worth.
The voice of All in Church calls men to give
Truth's corn and wine that mankind now may live.

SHEMAIAH, *the Priest*

(*To* NEHEMIAH, *as* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* PERSECUTION *persist in obstructing the door of the temple so that* ALL CREEDS *cannot enter.*)

Prince, wilt thou not rebuke this cursed lie
Of Human Goodness, lest all men should die?

NEHEMIAH

(NEHEMIAH *smiles approvingly at* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* PERSECUTION.)

I see in each the image of blest Mind;
Each face I see is gentle, patient, kind.

NEHEMIAH

(*to* SHEMAIAH, *the Priest,* ZADOK, *the Scribe,* PEDAIAH *of the Levites and* HANAN.)

Thou hast been faithful, for thou
Hast distributed unto thy brethren.

(*Enter men and women and children. They are all carrying baskets of corn and wine and oil.*)

ALL

We come, blest Nehemiah, here to-day
To praise the King of kings and watch and pray.

(*Enter men with ware, selling fish. They go directly to the nobles and give them their earnings.*)

ZADOK

(*to* NEHEMIAH)

What evil thing is this that they do,
And profane the Sabbath day?

NEHEMIAH

(*to the Nobles*)

Business can ne'er profane the Sabbath day.
When men go to their Church e'en as they go
To work, then all earth's sin shall pass away.
There can be no more sickness, pain nor woe
When Church becomes the quiet resting place
Of all the world's activities; we then
Shall see our Maker ever face to face;
Business and Church shall be the home of men.

(as if in prophecy)

I see on earth Church and true business rise
Together in one temple. Paradise

Shall then be this earth's dwelling place for all.
The chimes of Church shall ring and truly call
All men to work.

(*Nobles stand reverently with bowed heads. Darkness creeps on suddenly, as if a storm were rising. The gates are open.*)

ALL

Let all the gates be shut this night,
And opened not till after the Sabbath day.
Let all the gates be shut!

(*The iron gates swing forcefully shut, and as they close the setting sun shines forth with wondrous splendor.*)

HUMAN GOODNESS

(*to those who sell fish*)

Why lodg'st thou about the wall? What right
Hast thou to profane the Sabbath day?
I always keep the rest, a Sabbath rest,
I work unselfishly for God alone.

NEHEMIAH

I learned of Understanding years ago
How to relinquish human care and woe!

(*Enter several young men talking to young women of foreign birth. The women have low, degraded appearance. They are all*

intoxicated. Loud, coarse jesting and vulgar caressing.)

THE YOUNG MEN
(*to* NEHEMIAH)

Nehemiah, (*laughing boisterously*) our
wives of foreign birth!

NEHEMIAH
(*to the* YOUNG MEN)

I raise no questions with them. They are
thine
Own choice, and thus they must be mine.

HUMAN GOODNESS
(*weeping*)

(*To one young man*) And thou, now
Wouldst wed strange wives!
(*To another*) And thou?
Thou seekest e'er thine own
And not another's good!

EZRA

Strange fancies have we when we seek our
own,
And not another's good. None can atone
For wrong; forever it is cast without,
With "dogs, and sorcerers," with creeds and
doubts!
Strange wives, strange creeds, strange gods,
strange idle prayers,

Strange deprivations, strange diseases, cares!

PERSECUTION
(*proudly*)

I always must atone
For wrong!

HUMAN GOODNESS

Forever I have cast wrong out!
Strange creeds can never enter here. No doubt,
Nothing unworthy e'er has passed my door;
Though I am best of all the earth, no more
Men seek me. (*She stands alone.*)
(*to* NEHEMIAH)
See, ye built this wall.
Art thou, then, not afraid that it will fall?
The King will give thee pow'r to command;
All things in church are under thine own hand.

(*The women of strange birth, with* CREEDS OF MEN, *try to enter the temple.* HUMAN GOODNESS *drives them back.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*compassionately, to* HUMAN GOODNESS *and* PERSECUTION)

Keep all my human power, if ye choose;
In losing it, it is no thing to lose.
Keep all my human goodness. God is good,

With Him, all men are truly understood.
Divine authority is mine this hour,
And thine. God giveth man in Church Love's pow'r.
God giveth man in Church the right to speak
Words that will comfort all the worn and weak
And burdened sons of earth. This is man's right,—
Divine authority and endless right.

(*As* NEHEMIAH *surrenders all human power and human goodness, the wives of strange birth are seen to be the radiant daughters of* SHALLUM. *Exit* HUMAN GOODNESS. *She appears crushed. Enter* DISCERNMENT. *All crowd about* NEHEMIAH. *Exeunt* CREEDS OF MEN *and* PERSECUTION.)

(*Enter* UNDERSTANDING. *She stands in the door of the Temple and lovingly welcomes all. The people with baskets of corn and wine and oil on their arms sing together.)*

ALL

(*Led by* UNDERSTANDING *and* NEHEMIAH, *the people walk in groups on the towering heights of the walls.* NEHEMIAH *passes*

to each a Book of the Law and immediately UNDERSTANDING *gives to each another Book of the Law. The people hold these books aloft, one in the right hand and the other in the left, and read as they walk. The last rays of the setting sun shine softly over the procession of singers.)*

(*Singing together.*)

"Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
And uphold me with thy free spirit.
Thou delightest not in sacrifice;
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion:
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem."

NEHEMIAH

(*hands uplifted to heaven—to the men and women on the heights of the walls*)

"Remember me, O my God, concerning this,
And wipe not out my good deeds that I have done

For the house of my God, and for the offices
thereof—
Remember me, O my God, for good."
For I, as "The King's Cupbearer,"
Bring peace and joy to earth.
Yea, I, as "The King's Cupbearer,"
Herald mankind's new birth.
I prophesy peace, salvation.
Jerusalem, saved, begins
To mould the world in one nation
And cleanse earth's temple of sins—
Sins that have stirred through malice
Earth's nations to war and hate.
Jerusalem holds the chalice
Of Love at her heavenly gate.
Within Jerusalem, all men shall be
Both male and female, sinless, deathless, free.

(UNDERSTANDING, WAKEFULNESS, INTUITION, FAITH *and* DISCERNMENT *stand on the highest point of the walls looking tenderly down to* NEHEMIAH. *They typify collectively the womanly quality of spiritual understanding which redeems all business, men, nations and churches. As these women walk upon the walls, they are intently reading two Books of the Law, which they hold aloft in either hand.*

Brilliant rays of the setting sun light up the pages of the open Books.)

Father, we thank Thee that Love's marriage feast
Is now prepared for all mankind. The least
Thy grateful children o'er the earth can say
Is: "Father, we thank Thee tenderly today."
"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:
Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,
Unto the testimony of Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They shall prosper that love thee." Psalm 122.

(NEHEMIAH *gratefully beholding* UNDERSTANDING, *who looks down from the highest point of the wall, lovingly addresses her.)*

From this time forth no one shall speak on earth
Save Understanding. Men now know the worth
Of Understanding's healing pow'r and might.

(*with head bowed in prayer*)
Father, o'er all the earth, "Let there be light!"

UNDERSTANDING

(*with hands extended, looks down from the highest point of the wall*)
(*in prayer*)
Now the glorious day
Of understanding dawns, Thy servants may
Lodge in Jerusalem eternally.
With Anglo-Israel wedded, men shall rise,
Triumphant over self. Earth's paradise
Shall dawn for Judah. On this wedding morn,
All men are satisfied, yea, newly born.
Triumphant on the walls of Church, they stand,
All men and creeds together. Hand in hand,
Blest Capital and Labor, too, shall give
Themselves in wedlock that all men may live.
This is earth's wondrous wedding,—Love shall bind
Nations and men together. They shall find
In unity, "no questions" can be "raised."
They shall be bound in wedlock. God be praised!
(*These words portray salvation for all Capital and Labor, nations and creeds on*

earth, brought about by the union of the great Anglo-Saxon countries, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of America, including in this indissoluable union all nations on earth. Thus the vision of perpetual peace is fulfilled, the waste walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt, and the one Nation, Temple or Church, the Kingdom of Heaven, appears.)

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